

107269

UNDER THE PUNKAH.

BY

PHIL ROBINSON,

AUTHOR OF "IN MY INDIAN GARDEN," ETC.

NEW AND CHEAPER EDITION.

LONDON:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
Limited,

St. Dunstan's House

FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1888.

[All rights reserved.]

NEW ISSUE OF POPULAR BOOKS.

Small crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. each.

Most of the following are specially adapted for Girls, for School Prizes, etc.

LITTLE MEN. By Miss ALCOTT.

HITHERTO. By Mrs. WHITNEY.

FROM FORECASTLE TO CABIN. By Captain SAMUELS. With numerous Illustrations.

IN MY INDIAN GARDEN. By PHIL ROBINSON.

LITTLE WOMEN, AND LITTLE WOMEN WEDDED. By Miss ALCOTT.

ERIC AND ETHEL. By FRANCIS FRANCIS. With numerous Illustrations.

THE KEYHOLE COUNTRY. By GERTRUDE JERDON. With numerous Illustrations.

WE GIRLS. By Mrs. WHITNEY.

THE OTHER GIRLS. By Mrs. WHITNEY. A Sequel to the above.

ADVENTURES OF JIMMY BROWN. By W. L. ALDEN.

UNDER THE LILACS. By Miss ALCOTT. With numerous Illustrations.

JIMMY'S CRUISE IN THE "PINAFORE." By Miss ALCOTT.

UNDER THE PUNKAH. By PHIL ROBINSON.

JACK AND JILL: a Village Story. By Miss ALCOTT.

A SUMMER IN LESLIE GOLDTHWAITE'S LIFE. By Mrs. WHITNEY.

EIGHT COUSINS; or, the Aunt Hill. By Miss ALCOTT. Illustrated.

DRED: a Tale of the Great Swamp. By Mrs. H. BEECHER STOWE.

WORK, AND BEGINNING AGAIN: a Story of Experience. By Miss ALCOTT. Illustrated.

REAL FOLKS. By Mrs. WHITNEY.

SILVER PITCHERS; and other Stories. By Miss ALCOTT.

MY WIFE AND I. By Mrs. H. BEECHER STOWE.

A ROSE IN BLOOM. By Miss ALCOTT.

FAITH GARTNEY'S GIRLHOOD. By Mrs. WHITNEY.

AN ONLY SISTER. By MADAME DE WITT.

AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL. By Miss ALCOTT.

LULU'S LIBRARY. By Miss ALCOTT. Illustrated.

London:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
Limited,

ST. DUNSTON'S HOUSE, FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C.

"UNDER THE PUNKAH."

PREFATORY MOTTOES,

BY WAY OF ARGUMENT.

	PAGE
THE MAN-EATING TREE	I
" But say, where grows this Tree, from hence how far?"	
<i>Eve to Serpent.</i>	
" On the blasted heath	
Fell Upas sits, the Hydra-tree of death."— <i>Darwin.</i>	
" Here the foul harpies build their nests	
. . . with rueful sound,	
Perch'd in the dismal tree, they fill the air."— <i>Dante.</i>	
" Not a tree is to be found in the valley. Not a beast	
or bird, or any living thing, lives in its vicinity."— <i>Foersch.</i>	
MY WIFE'S BIRDS	14
THE PARROT	17
" That odious libel of a human voice."— <i>Cowper.</i>	
" His words, like arrows	
That know no aim beyond the archer's wit,	
Strike sometimes what eludes philosophy."— <i>Shelley.</i>	
THE BULLFINCH	26
" The mellow bullfinch."— <i>Thompson.</i>	
" Whistles soft his flute-like note."— <i>Savage.</i>	

	PAGE
THE CANARY	27
<p>“A bird for thee in silken bands I hold, Whose yellow plumage shines like polished gold. From distant isles the lovely stranger came, And bears the fortunate Canaries’ name.”—<i>Lyttleton</i>.</p>	
THE LINNET	27
<p>“The warbling (<i>Philips</i>), chirping (<i>Falconer</i>), artless (<i>Shenstone</i>), merry (<i>Scott</i>), chanting (<i>Burns</i>), linnet, with unnumbered notes (<i>Cunningham</i>).”</p>	
HUNTING OF THE SOKO	35
<p>“My lords, a solemn hunting is in hand.” <i>Titus Andronicus</i>.</p>	
<p>“It is no gentle chase.”—<i>Venus and Adonis</i>.</p>	
<p>“Whence and what art thou, execrable shape? That darest, though grim and terrible, to advance Thy miscreated front.”—<i>Paradise Lost</i>.</p>	
<p>“You do it wrong, being so majestic, To offer it the show of violence.”—<i>Hamlet</i>.</p>	
<p>“God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.” <i>Portia</i>.</p>	
<p>“With a groan that had something terribly human in it, and yet was full of brutishness, the man-ape fell forward on his face.”—<i>Du Chaillu</i>.</p>	
LEGEND OF THE BLAMELESS PRIEST	64
SIGHT-SEEING	73
EASTERN SMELLS AND WESTERN NOSES	169
<p>“We confess that beside the smell of species there may be individual odours . . . but that an unsavoury odour is gentilitious or national, if rightly understood, we cannot well concede, nor will the information of reason or sense induce it.”—<i>Sir Thos. Browne</i>.</p>	

"A nose stood in the middle of her face."—*Iago*.

"A good nose is requisite also, to smell out work for the other senses."—*Autolycus*.

"The literature of Noses is extensive. Sterne has a chapter on them in 'Tristram Shandy,' and other authors have contributed respectively 'a Sermon on Noses;' 'On the Dignity, Gravity, and Authority of Noses;' 'The Noses of Adam and Eve;' 'Pious Meditations on the Nose of the Virgin Mary;' 'Review of Noses.' Shakespeare was never tired of poking fun at the nose or drawing morals from it, but what is more remarkable it might easily be proved constructively from what he has said that he believed with Professor Jäger that 'the nose is the soul.'"—*Oriolana*

GAMINS 181

"They are not dirty by chance—or accident—say twice or thrice per diem, but they are always dirty."

Christopher North.

"O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means, which public manners breeds.

Sonnet (Shakespeare).

STONE THROWING 183

"That trick of throwing a stone at a tree and attaching some mighty issue to hitting or missing, which you will find mentioned in one or more biographies, I well remember."

Wendell Holmes.

"1st Serv.—Nay, if we be forbidden stones, we'll fall to it with our teeth."—*Henry VI.*

"That boy, rather than not throw at all, would throw the corner-stone of his father's house, or his grandfather's gravestone, the Helga Feli sanctified to Norway by Thorolf or the black crystal of the Kaaba, the blarney stone, or the holy rocks of Stennis. Nothing would be sacred from him,

if he wanted to throw. But he might plead the practice to be sanctified ; for, setting aside other precedents, did not Adam and Abraham pelt the Devil with stones when he disturbed them at prayers, and had not the Greeks many stones which the gods themselves threw down from Olympus. Jupiter was always throwing stones. Thus old Lear, invoking punishment, calls on the gods to pelt him with 'stones of sulphur.'—*Oriolana*.

TAILORS 193

"Some foolish knave, I think, it first began
The slander that three tailors are one man."—*Taylor*.

"O monstrous arrogance ! Thou liest,
Thou thread, thou thimble,
Thou yard, three quarters, half
Yard, quarter, nail ;
Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter cricket, thou
Braved in mine own house with a skein of thread !
Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant !"

Taming of the Shrew.

"Give the gods a thankful sacrifice. When it pleaseth
their deities to take the wife of a man from him, it shows to
man the tailors of the earth."—*Antony and Cleopatra*.

"A tailor makes a man ? Aye, a tailor, sir."—*Lear*.

"Remember how Master Feeble, 'the forcible Feeble,'
proved himself the best of Falstaff's recruits ; with what
discretion Robin Starveling played the part of Thisby's
mother before the Duke, and do not forget to their credit
the public spirit of the tailors of Tooley Street."—*Oriolana*.

"I have a honest lad to my taylor, who I never knew
guilty of one truth—no, not when it had been to his
advantage not to lye."—*Montaigne*.

THE HARA-KIRI 198

"Escape in deeath from obloquy I sought,
Though just to others, to myself unjust."—*Dante*.

"Temea, lassa ! la morte, e non avea,
Poi di fuggirla ardire."—*Tasso.*

"The pitiful, pitiless knife."—*Tennyson.*

"Oh ! happy dagger."—*Juliet.*

ISTE PUER 210

"Let him mature : you cannot ripen fruit by beating it."
Telugu Proverb.

"His disgrace is to be called boy."—*Love's Labour Lost.*

"Unrespective boys."—*Richard III.*

"St. Nicholas thought well enough of boys to become
their patron saint."—*Oriolana.*

DEATH, THE DAUGHTER OF MERCY 224

DOGS WE HAVE ALL MET 231

"Give to dogs what thou deny'st to men."
Timon of Athens.

"In the Rabbinical book it saith
The dogs howl when with icy breath
Great Sammael the Angel of Death,
Takes through the town his flight."—*Longfellow.*



UNDER THE PUNKAH.

THE MAN-EATING TREE.¹

PEREGRINE ORIEL, my maternal uncle, was a great traveller, as his prophetic sponsors at the font seemed to have guessed he would be. Indeed he had rummaged in the garrets and cellars of

¹ Before committing this paper to the ridicule of the Great Mediocre—for many, I fear, will be inclined to regard this story as incredible—I would venture on the expression of an opinion regarding credulity, which I do not remember to have met before. It is this. Placing supreme Wisdom and supreme Unwisdom at the two extremes, and myself in the exact mean between them, I am surprised to find that whether I travel towards the one extreme or the other, the credulity of those I meet increases. To put it as a paradox—*whether a man be foolisher or wiser than I am, he is more credulous.* I make this remark to point out to those of the Great Mediocre whose notice it may have escaped, that credulity is not of itself shameful or contemptible, and that it depends upon the manner rather than the matter of their belief, whether they gravitate toward the sage or the reverse way. According, therefore, to the incredibility found in the following, the reader may measure, as pleases him, his wisdom or his unwisdom.—Z. ORIEL.

the earth with something more than ordinary diligence. But in the narrative of his travels he did not, unfortunately, preserve the judicious caution of Xenophon between "the thing seen" and "the thing heard," and thus it came about that the town-councillors of Brunsbüttel (to whom he had shown a duck-billed platypus, caught alive by him in Australia, and who had him posted for "an importer of artificial vermin") were not alone in their scepticism of some of the old man's tales.

Thus, for instance, who could hear and believe the tale of the man-sucking tree from which he had barely escaped with life? He called it himself "more terrible than the Upas."—"This awful plant, that rears its splendid death-shade in the central solitude of a Nubian fern forest, sickens by its unwholesome humours all vegetation from its immediate vicinity, and feeds upon the wild beasts that, in the terror of the chase, or the heat of noon, seek the thick shelter of its boughs ; upon the birds that, flitting across the open space, come within the charmed circle of its power, or innocently refresh themselves from the cups of its great waxen flowers ; upon even man himself when, an infrequent prey, the savage seeks its asylum in the storm, or turns from the harsh foot-wounding sword-grass of the glade, to pluck the wondrous fruit that hang plumb down among the wondrous foliage." And such fruit !—"glorious golden ovals, great honeydrops, swelling by their own weight into pear-shaped translucencies. The foliage glistens with a strange dew, that all day long

drips on to the ground below, nurturing a rank growth of grasses, which shoot up in places so high that their spikes of fierce blood-fed green show far up among the deep-tinted foliage of the terrible tree, and, like a jealous body-guard, keep concealed the fearful secret of the charnel-house within, and draw round the black roots of the murderous plant a decent screen of living green."

Such was his description of the plant ; and the other day, looking up in a botanical dictionary, I find that there is really known to naturalists a family of "carnivorous" plants ; but I see that they are most of them very small, and prey upon little insects only. My maternal uncle, however, knew nothing of this, for he died before the days of the discovery of the sun dew and pitcher plants, and grounding his knowledge of the man-sucking tree simply on his own terrible experience of it, explained its existence by theories of his own. Denying the fixity of all the laws of nature except one, that the stronger shall endeavour to consume the weaker, and "holding even this fixity to be itself only a means to a greater general changefulness," he argued that—since any partial distribution of the faculty of self-defence would presume an unworthy partiality in the Creator, and since the sensual instincts of beast and vegetable are manifestly analogous—"the world must be as percipient as sentient throughout." Carrying on his theory (for it was something more than "hypothesis" with him) a stage or two further, he arrived at the belief that, "given the necessity of any imminent

danger or urgent self-interest, every animal or vegetable could eventually revolutionize its nature, the wolf feeding on grass or nesting in trees, and the violet arming herself with thorns or entrapping insects."

"How?" he would ask, "can we claim for man the consequence of perceptions to sensations, and yet deny to beasts that hear, see, feel, smell, and taste, a percipient principle co-existent with their senses? And if in the whole range of the 'animate' world there is this gift of self-defence against extirpation and offence against weakness, why is the 'inanimate' world, holding as fierce a struggle for existence as the other, to be left defenceless and unarmed? And I deny that it is. The Brazilian epiphyte strangles the tree and sucks out its juices. The tree, again, to starve off its vampire parasite, withdraws its juices into its roots, and piercing the ground in some new place, turns the current of its sap into other growths. The epiphyte then drops off the dead boughs on to the fresh green sprouts springing from the ground beneath it—and so the fight goes on. Again, look at the Indian peepul tree; in what does the fierce yearning of its roots towards the distant well differ from the sad struggling of the camel to the oasis or of Sennacherib's army to the saving Nile?

"Is the sensitive plant unconscious! I have walked for miles through plains of it, and watched, till the watching almost made me afraid lest the plants should pluck up courage and turn upon me, the green

carpet paling into silver grey before my feet, and fainting away all round me as I walked. So strangely did I feel the influence of this universal aversion, that I would have argued with the plant ; but what was the use ? If only I stretched out my hands, the mere shadow of the limb terrified the vegetable to sickness ; shrubs crumbled up at every commencement of my speech ; and at my periods great sturdy-looking bushes, to whose robustness I had foolishly appealed, sank in pallid supplication. Not a leaf would keep me company. A breath went forth from me that sickened life. My mere presence paralyzed life, and I was glad at last to come out among a less timid vegetation, and to feel the resentful spear-grass retaliating on the heedlessness that would have crushed it. The vegetable world, however, has its revenges. You may keep the guinea-pig in a hutch, but how will you pet the basilisk ? The little sensitive plant in your garden amuses your children (who will find pleasure also in seeing cockchafers spin round on a pin), but how could you transplant a vegetable that seizes the running deer, strikes down the passing bird, and once taking hold of him, sucks the carcase of man himself, till his matter becomes as vague as his mind, and all his 'animate' capabilities cannot snatch him from the terrible embrace of—God help him !—an 'inanimate' tree ? ”

“ Many years ago,” said my uncle, “ I turned my restless steps towards Central Africa, and made the journey

from where the Senegal empties itself into the Atlantic to the Nile, skirting the Great Desert, and reaching Nubia on my way to the eastern coast. I had with me then three native attendants, two of them brothers, the third, Otona, a young savage from the gaboon uplands, a mere lad in his teens ; and one day, leaving my mule with the two men, who were pitching my tent for the night, I went on with my gun, the boy accompanying me, towards a fern forest, which I saw in the near distance. As I approached it I found the forest was cut into two by a wide glade, and seeing a small herd of the common antelope, an excellent beast in the pot, browsing their way along the shaded side, I crept after them. Though ignorant of their real danger, the herd was suspicious, and slowly trotting along before me, enticed me for a mile or more along the verge of the fern growths. Turning a corner I suddenly became aware of a solitary tree growing in the middle of the glade—one tree alone. It struck me at once that I had never seen a tree exactly like it before ; but being intent upon venison for my supper, I looked at it only long enough to satisfy my first surprise at seeing a single plant of such rich growth flourishing luxuriantly in a spot where only the harsh fern-caness seemed to thrive.

“The deer meanwhile were midway between me and the tree, and looking at them I saw they were going to cross the glade. Exactly opposite them was an opening in the forest, in which I should certainly have lost my

supper ; so I fired into the middle of the family as they were filing before me. I hit a young fawn, and the rest of the herd, wheeling round in their sudden terror, made off in the direction of the tree, leaving the fawn struggling on the ground. Otona, the boy, ran forward at my order to secure it, but the little creature seeing him coming, attempted to follow its comrades, and at a fair pace held on their course. The herd had meanwhile reached the tree, but suddenly, instead of passing under it, swerved in their career, and swept round it at some yards distance.

" Was I mad ? or did the plant really try to catch the deer ? On a sudden I saw, or thought I saw, the tree violently agitated, and while the ferns all round were standing motionless in the dead evening air, its boughs were swayed by some sudden gust towards the herd, and swept in the force of their impulse almost to the ground. I drew my hand across my eyes, closed them for a moment, and looked again. The tree was as motionless as myself !

" Towards it, and now close to it, the boy was running in excited pursuit of the fawn. He stretched out his hands to catch it. It bounded from his eager grasp. Again he reached forward, and again it escaped him. There was another rush forward, and the next instant boy and deer were beneath the tree.

" And now there was no mistaking what I saw.

" The tree was convulsed with motion, leaned forward,

swept its thick foliated boughs to the ground, and enveloped from my sight the pursuer and the pursued ! I was within a hundred yards, and the cry of Otona from the midst of the tree came to me in all the clearness of its agony. There was then one stifled, strangling scream, and except for the agitation of the leaves where they had closed upon the boy, there was not a sign of life !

“I called out ‘Otona !’ No answer came. I tried to call out again, but my utterance was like that of some wild beast smitten at once with sudden terror and its death wound. I stood there, changed from all semblance of a human being. Not all the terrors of earth together could have made me take my eye from the awful plant, or my foot off the ground. I must have stood thus for at least an hour, for the shadows had crept out from the forest half across the glade before that hideous paroxysm of fear left me. My first impulse then was to creep stealthily away lest the tree should perceive me, but my returning reason bade me approach it. The boy might have fallen into the lair of some beast of prey, or perhaps the terrible life in the tree was that of some great serpent among its branches. Preparing to defend myself, I approached the silent tree—the harsh grass crisping beneath my feet with a strange loudness—the cicadas in the forest shrilling till the air seemed throbbing round me with waves of sound. The terrible truth was soon before me in all its awful novelty.

“The vegetable first discovered my presence at about fifty yards distance. I then became aware of a stealthy motion among the thick-lipped leaves, reminding me of some wild beast slowly gathering itself up from long sleep, a vast coil of snakes in restless motion. Have you ever seen bees hanging from a bough—a great cluster of bodies, bee clinging to bee—and by striking the bough, or agitating the air, caused that massed life to begin sulkily to disintegrate, each insect asserting its individual right to move? And do you remember how, without one bee leaving the pensile cluster, the whole became gradually instinct with sullen life and horrid with a multitudinous motion?

“I came within twenty yards of it. The tree was quivering through every branch, muttering for blood, and, helpless with rooted feet, yearning with every branch towards me. It was that Terror of the Deep Sea which the men of the northern fiords dread, and which, anchored upon some sunken rock, stretches into vain space its longing arms, pellucid as the sea itself, and as relentless—maimed Polypheme groping for his victims.

“Each separate leaf was agitated and hungry. Like hands they fumbled together, their fleshy palms curling upon themselves and again unfolding, closing on each other and falling apart again, thick, helpless, fingerless hands—rather lips or tongues than hands—dimpled closely with little cup-like hollows. I approached nearer and nearer, step by step, till I saw that these soft horrors

were all of them in motion, opening and closing incessantly.

"I was now within ten yards of the farthest reaching bough. Every part of it was hysterical with excitement. The agitation of its members was awful—sickening yet fascinating. In an ecstasy of eagerness for the food so near them, the leaves turned upon each other. Two meeting would suck together face to face, with a force that compressed their joint thickness to a half, thinning the two leaves into one, now grappling in a volute like a double shell, writhing like some green worm, and at last faint with the violence of the paroxysm, would slowly separate, falling apart as leeches gorged drop off the limbs. A sticky dew glistened in the dimples, welled over, and trickled down the leaf. The sound of it dripping from leaf to leaf made it seem as if the tree was muttering to itself. The beautiful golden fruit as they swung here and there were clutched now by one leaf, and now by another, held for a moment close enfolded from the sight, and then as suddenly released. Here a large leaf, vampire-like, had sucked out the juices of a smaller one. It hung limp and bloodless, like a carcase of which the weasel has tired.

"I watched the terrible struggle till my starting eyes, strained by intense attention, refused their office, and I can hardly say what I saw. But the tree before me seemed to have become a live beast. Above me I felt conscious was a great limb, and each of its thousand

clammy hands reached downwards towards me, fumbling. It strained, shivered, rocked, and heaved. It flung itself about in despair. The boughs, tantalized to madness with the presence of flesh, were tossed to this side and to that, in the agony of a frantic desire. The leaves were wrung together as the hands of one driven to madness by sudden misery. I felt the vile dew spurting from the tense veins fall upon me. My clothes began to give out a strange odour. The ground I stood on glistened with animal juices.

"Was I bewildered by terror? Had my senses abandoned me in my need? I know not—but the tree seemed to me to be alive. Leaning over towards me, it seemed to be pulling up its roots from the softened ground, and to be moving towards me. A mountainous monster, with myriad lips, mumbling together for my life, was upon me!

"Like one who desperately defends himself from imminent death, I made an effort for life, and fired my gun at the approaching horror. To my dizzied senses the sound seemed far off, but the shock of the recoil partially recalled me to myself, and starting back I re-loaded. The shot had torn their way into the soft body of the great thing. The trunk as it received the wound shuddered, and the whole tree was struck with a sudden quiver. A fruit fell down—slipping from the leaves, now rigid with swollen veins, as from carven foliage. Then I saw a large arm slowly droop, and

without a sound it was severed from the juice-fattened bole, and sank down softly, noiselessly, through the glistening leaves. I fired again, and another vile fragment was powerless—*dead*. At each discharge the terrible vegetable yielded a life. Piecemeal I attacked it, killing here a leaf and there a branch. My fury increased with the slaughter till, when my ammunition was exhausted, the splendid giant was left a wreck—as if some hurricane had torn through it. On the ground lay heaped together the fragments, struggling, rising and falling, gasping. Over them drooped in dying languor a few stricken boughs, while upright in the midst stood, dripping at every joint, the glistening trunk.

“My continued firing had brought up one of my men on my mule. He dared not, so he told me, come near me, thinking me mad. I had now drawn my hunting-knife, and with this was fighting—*with the leaves*. Yes—but each leaf was instinct with a horrid life ; and more than once I felt my hand entangled for a moment and seized as if by sharp lips. Ignorant of the presence of my companion I made a rush forward over the fallen foliage, and with a last paroxysm of frenzy drove my knife up to the handle into the soft bole, and, slipping on the fast congealing sap, fell, exhausted and unconscious, among the still panting leaves.

“My companions carried me back to the camp, and after vainly searching for Otona awaited my return to consciousness. Two or three hours elapsed before I.

could speak, and several days before I could approach the terrible thing. My men would not go near it. It was quite dead; for as we came up a great-billed bird with gaudy plumage that had been securely feasting on the decaying fruit, flew up from the wreck. We removed the rotting foliage, and there, among the dead leaves still limp with juices, and piled round the roots, we found the ghastly relics of many former meals, and—its last nourishment—the corpse of little Otona. To have removed the leaves would have taken too long, so we buried the body as it was with a hundred vampire leaves still clinging to it.”

Such, as nearly as I remember it, was my uncle's story of the Man-eating Tree.





MY WIFE'S BIRDS.

A REMINISCENCE.

MY wife once made up her mind that she wanted a bird. She had, she told me, many reasons for wanting one. One was that the landlady's son was apprenticed to a bird-cage maker, and had promised to use all his influence with his employer—who, the landlady told my wife, was a very civil man—to get us a cage cheap. Another reason for having a bird was, that the old groundsel man at the corner asked her every day if she would not buy a penn'orth of the weed for her "dear little birds," and that she felt an impostor (inasmuch as she had no bird) every time she met the groundsel man.

"But, my dear," said I, "you have *not* got a bird; and if you only tell him so, he will give up annoying you."

"He does not annoy me at all," she replied; "he is a very nice, respectable, old man indeed, and I am sure no one could have been angry at his way of asking you to buy his groundsel—and then it was so beautifully fresh!"

"But you don't mean to say you bought any?" I asked in surprise.

"Yes I did," was the answer ; "it was so beautifully fresh—and I did so want to have a bird—and so, whenever I refuse to buy any now, he thinks I am too mean to give my birds a pennyworth of groundsel now and then. It is very cruel to birds to keep them without any green food at all."

I felt at the time that there was something wrong about this line of argument, but could not quite see where to fix the error without going very far back to the beginning (though women, it seems to me, always do this), so I let it pass, not thinking it worth while to point out again that as she had no bird, the groundsel seller's animadversions and suspicions were without foundation, and therefore absurd.

And then my wife went on to give other reasons for wanting to have a bird ; but the only one I can remember just now, was to the effect that the bird would not give any trouble to anybody but herself, and that it could not possibly matter to me whether she had a bird or not. I am not quite sure that I have given that reason right, but it is about as near as I generally get to some of my wife's reasons for things.

"It will, you see," she repeated, as she cracked an egg, "be no trouble to anybody but myself. I will look after it myself and—"

"The Lord in His pitiful mercy keep an eye upon that bird !" I piously ejaculated.

"Oh, John !—and of course I will feed it and wash it—

its cage I mean—not *feed* the cage you know, but wash it—and when I go out to do the housekeeping for ourselves”—which by the way always seems to me to consist in meeting friends at the gate and then going off with them to look at new music—“I will do the bird’s housekeeping too.”

Now, I really never had any objection to a bird from the first. On the contrary, I like birds—little ones. But my wife has, all through, insisted on it that I do not love “God’s creatures,” as she calls them, and took from the first a certain complacent pride in having made me more “Christian-like” in this matter. “You won’t hurt it, will you, John?” she pleaded pathetically, when she hung up a linnet.

“*Hurt* it!” I said, in astonishment, for I am a very Buddhist in my tenderness to animals. “On the contrary—”

“Yes, dear, I know how you hate them; and you are a sweet, good, old darling to say you love them, just to please me.”

“You are quite mistaken,” I began, “in supposing—”

“No I am not, you good old duck, for you always pretended just in the same way that you liked Lucy (my wife’s cousin), though I know you don’t, for soon after we were married, I remember you called her a gad-about and a gossip.”

And the end of it was that I was mean enough to

accept the virtues of self-denial and consideration thus thrust upon me. Consequently, I have had ever since to affect a condescension whenever I take notice of the birds, although when my wife is not there, I waste a good deal of time over the pretty things.

But "God's creatures" after all is a term that you can lump most things under. And if my wife had drawn a distinction between the linnet and her great parrot, more like a vulture than a cage bird, I would have candidly confessed to a difference in my regard for the two fowls. Linnets are very harmless, I fancy. At any rate ours never does anything more outrageous than splash its water and seed about of a morning. For the rest of the day, it is mostly hopping off the floor on to the perch and back again, except when you go to look at it close. It then hops only sideways off the perch on to the wires of the cage—and back again.

But the parrot ! It is dead now—and it took as much burying as a horse—was more of a reptile than a bird, I should say. At any rate it had very few feathers on it after a bit, and the way it worried my wife's Maltese terrier was most unusual, I fancy, in a bird. The first time it pounced down on Tiny, who was only going to eat some of the parrot's pudding, we thought it was going to eat the dog—though I found, on looking it up since, that parrots never eat other animals, as vultures and other birds do sometimes. But it wasn't. It was only pulling fluff off the dog. But Tiny's fluff grows so

fast, and he is so light, that we generally pick him up by it. And so when the parrot began to pull at it, it rolled the dog all about, and as one of the bird's claws got caught in the fluff of the dog and the other in the fluff of the hearth-rug, they got rolled up in the corner of it—the terrier and the parrot together ; and the noises that proceeded from those two, and the confusion there was of hearth-rug and fluff and feathers, defies all description. Getting them unmixed took us ever so long. We had first of all to give the parrot a spoon to hold in his mouth, and then a fork in one claw, while we undid the other. And as soon as it was undone, it got its claw fixed round my thumb, and then, dropping the spoon, it took hold of my cuff with its beak. And when I had got the bird off me, it got fastened on to my wife ; for the thing was so frightened at itself, it wanted something, it didn't matter what, to hold on to. But at last we got it on to the curtains, and there it hung half the morning, saying to itself, as it always does when it's put out, "Polly's very sick ; poor Polly's going to die." Tiny, in the meantime, had disappeared into the scullery under the sink, and to the last day of the parrot's life, whenever the dog heard the parrot scream, it used to make for the same spot. And as the parrot was mostly screeching all day, the dog pretty well lived under the sink. But the parrot died at last, poor beast.

The few feathers it had on must have had something to do with it, I fancy. If I were a bird, I know, and

had so few feathers, I should die too. It does not seem much worth living with so few on. One could hardly call oneself a bird.

So one evening, when I came home, I found Jenny in tears, and there on the hearth-rug, was the poor old parrot, dead, and about as bald as a bird could be—except in a pie. I asked Jenny how it all happened ; but she couldn't speak at first for crying, and when she did tell me, it was heart-breaking to hear her sobs between the words.

"You know," she began, "Polly hasn't been eating enough for a long time, and to-day, when I came in from my housekeeping, I saw him looking very sad about something. So I called him, and he came down off his perch. But he couldn't hop ; he was too weak, so he walked quite slowly across the floor to me—and *so* unsteadily ! I knew there was something dreadful going to happen. And when he got to my feet he couldn't climb up my dress, as he generally does. And I said to him, 'Polly, what's the matter with you ?' and he said"—but here she broke down altogether for a bit—"and he looked up at me and said, "*Polly's very sick.*" And when I picked him up he was as *light* as—oh ! *so* light. And he sat on my lap without moving, only breathing very hard. And then after a little, I saw his head drooping, so I touched him to wake him up. And he started up, and shook himself so hard that he rolled over on his side, and then I heard him saying something to himself, so I

put down my head to listen. And he opened his eyes again quite wide, and looked at me just as if he knew who I was quite well, and whispered to me, 'poor Polly's going to die.' And then he shut his wings up tight, and stretched out one leg after the other—and—and died."

I was very sorry for it, after he was really dead, for Jenny was very fond of him, and the parrot, I think, was very fond of her. So when I looked round and saw Tiny eating the dead bird's pudding, I gave a screech like the parrot used to give, and the little wretch shot off in a flurry of fluff to the sink, where we let him stay until we had buried poor Polly under the laurel-tree. Jenny proposed to have it stuffed; but considering the proposal of stuffing such a naked bird absurd, I evaded the suggestion nor did she press it.

But all this time I have been anticipating a great deal. It was the first mention of the parrot that set me off on the digression. I have not yet told you how my wife got her birds, or what birds she has got.

Well, I had given my consent, you remember, to a bird being bought; so immediately after breakfast, my wife went out to choose one—"a little one," she said. But before she went out she confided her want to the landlady, who, going out herself soon after, also interested herself in the selection, and told a few bird-fanciers to send up some birds to look at—"little ones;" moreover, before going out, she told her son that my wife wanted a bird—"a little one"—so when he went to the cage-

maker's he mentioned the fact, and during the day the cage-maker told about twenty bird-fanciers who came in on business that he could put them in the way of a customer—meaning my wife. "She wants a *little* bird," he said.

Well, I woke next morning a little earlier than usual, and with a vague general feeling that I was somewhere in the country—probably at my uncle's. All the air outside seemed to be full of twittering, just as I remembered hearing in the early mornings at my uncle's place in the country where sparrows were as thick as the leaves in the ivy on the house, and the robins and wrens, and those kinds of birds, used to swarm in the shrubbery. My wife was awake too, and as soon as she found me stirring she began (as she does on most mornings) to tell me a dream. I always find that other people's dreams haven't, as a rule, much plot in them, and so they don't tell well. Things always seem to come about and end up somehow without much reason.

And what my wife's dream was about I did not exactly understand at the time, but it was about the Tropical Court at the Crystal Palace. She dreamt that it was on fire, and all the parrots had gone mad with fright and were flying about, and so she ran down to the station, with all the creatures after her; but there was no room for her in the train, as all the parrots, and love birds, and lories, and parroquets, and cockatoos, and macaws, of the Palace were scrambling for places, and there was such a noise and flurrying of

feathers she was quite bewildered ; and though she told the guard that the birds were travelling without tickets, he only called out " all right " to the engine driver, and the train started off. But this frightened all the birds so that they came streaming out through the windows and lamp-holes, and flew about the station till it looked as if all the colours out of the advertisements had got loose and were flying around in strips and patches ! And so she ran upstairs to the omnibus, but all the cockatoos and things went with her, and it was just the same here, for when she was going to get in, the conductor said it was full inside, though, when she looked at the window she couldn't see a soul, but when she opened the door and looked in she found it was full of parrots and macaws ; and though she warned the conductor that none of the birds had got any money, he did not seem to take any notice of her, and only sounded his bell, and so the 'bus started. But this frightened the birds again, so that they all came streaming out through the door, and flew up the street with her to the cab-stand ; and there it was just the same—and everywhere all day it was just the same ; but though she kept trying to explain to people, in an exasperated and, she felt, unsatisfactory way, that it was absurd and unreasonable for all these birds, which she had nothing to do with, to be following her about so, no one took any adequate interest in the matter, or seemed to think it at all irregular or annoying. Her conversations on the subject with policemen were equally inconclusive and absurd ; and so the day

went on—and very exhausting it was, she said, with the eternal clamour of the birds, and the smothering feeling of having a cloud of feathery things fluttering round you, and so—

I had been listening all this time after only a very drowsy fashion, but while she talked there stole over me an impression that there *was* a strange confusion of bird voices about the premises, and just as she had got to the words “and so,” and was taking breath to remember what happened next in her dream, there came from down below a very Babel of fowls’ languages. In every tongue spoken by birds from China to Peru, we heard screams, squeaks, hootings, and crowings, while behind and through all we were aware of a multitudinous chattering, twittering, and chirping, accompanied by a sober obligato of cooing. I stared at my wife and she at me. Was I asleep?

“Pinching is a good thing,” I remembered, so I pinched my wife. There was no doubt of *her* being awake. I told her apologetically that I had pinched her in order to see if I was awake, and she was beginning to explain to me that I ought to have pinched *myself*; when we heard a knock at the door. “If you please, sir,” (it was Mary), “but has a cockytoe gone into your dressing-room? It’s got away from the bird man—which, sir, if you please there’s several of them at the door!”

* * * * *

All the time I was dressing the volucrine clamour con-

tinued unabated, and when I came downstairs I was not surprised at the sight that awaited me. The passage was filled with bird-cages ; and through the front door, which was open, I saw that the front "garden" was filled also, and that round the railings had collected a considerable mob of children, whitewashers' assistants, and errand-boys. I went to the dining-room window and looked out. My appearance was the signal for every bird man to seize at once two cages and hold them up for inspection. The contents of the cages screamed wildly ; all their friends on the ground screamed in sympathy, and the mob outside cheered the birds on to further demonstrations, by ill-naturedly imitating various cries.

I kept away from the window, therefore, and waited till my wife came down. Her delight at the exhibition seemed to me a little misplaced, the more so as she insisted on holding a levee at once. I began my breakfast therefore alone, but I hope I may never have such a meal again. Every other bird being warranted tame, was allowed to leave its cage, and very soon there was a parrot in the sugar basin, three macaws on the chandeliers, and a cockatoo on the back of each chair. The food on the table attracted a jackdaw, who dragged a rasher of bacon into the jelly-glass before his designs were suspected, and one wretched bird finding me out under the table, climbed up the leg of my trousers by his beak and claws. But my wife got bewildered at last, and appealed to me to settle matters. I did so summarily by explaining

that my wife wanted only *one* bird and that *a little one*—“a linnet or something of that kind.”

The disgust of the bird fanciers was instantly visible, and every man proceeded gloomily to repossess himself of his property. This was not so easy, however, as letting the birds go, and entailed an hour's hunting of parrots from corner to corner. Two cockatoos slipped down behind the sideboard and proceeded to fight there. They were only got out after moving the sideboard (the contents being previously taken out), and when they appeared were dirty beyond recognition and covered with cobwebs and fluff. But we found a long-missing salt spoon. At last, however, all seemed satisfactorily disposed of, when it was discovered that one of the cages was still empty, and a pensive voice from the chandelier drew all eyes upward. It was then discovered that a parrot had got its body inside one of the globes, and I volunteered to release it. So standing up on a chair, I took hold of the protruding tail and lifted the bird out. No sooner, however, did it find itself released than it made one violent effort to escape, and succeeded—leaving the tail in my hands!

I hastened to apologize and to offer the owner the tail, but the man would not accept either the apology or the feathers. On the contrary, he insisted that as I had spoiled the bird for sale I ought now to buy it.

And thus it was that we became possessed of the bird whose death I have already narrated. At first it had a dog's life of it. I was very angry with it for foisting

itself upon me : my wife disliked it for its tailless condition ; while the parrot itself suspected both of us as having designs upon its remaining feathers. But my wife's heart warmed to it at last, and the bird reciprocated the attachment. And when it died we were really sorry, and so, I think, was the parrot.

Meanwhile my wife was not satisfied with the purchase, and proceeded to select another bird for herself. The result was a canary, as I feared, and lest the canary should be dull with only the parrot, a bullfinch was also bought, and finally, for no better reason than that I saw than that "it would be just as easy to attend to three birds as to two," a linnet. Of course the canary proved to be a hen bird, and the linnet, I still believe, is a sparrow. But of the bullfinch there can be no doubt. He looks a bullfinch all over.

The bullfinch had only just been caught. I thought this a point against the bird. But my wife thought it all in its favour. "For now," she said, "we can train it exactly as we like."

Meanwhile the bird, being quite uneducated, was dashing about in its cage, and little feathers came floating down, and all the cage furniture was in a heap in the corner. There was evidently a very clear field for instruction, and my wife was eager to begin at once.

"Bullfinches are very fond of hemp seeds," said she oracularly, and proceeded to offer one to the bird. The result was eminently discouraging, for the terrified crea-

ture went into fits. For a time my wife was very patient, and stood there with the slippery little seed between her fingers. The bird, exhausted at last with its frantic efforts at escape, was on the floor of the cage, panting from fear and fatigue.

"I am sure he will get quite tame," said my wife, inspirited by this cessation of the bird's struggles. "Pretty Bully," and she changed the seed to the left hand, for the other was tired. The motion was sufficient, however, to set the bird off in another paroxysm of fluttering, to which in the same way succeeded another relapse. And so it went on for half an hour, this contest between the wild thing's terror and the woman's patience. And the bird won the day.

"You are a very stupid little bird," said my wife solemnly and emphatically to the open-beaked creature, as she withdrew from the strife to make acquaintance with the canary.

The canary was of another sort altogether, an old hen bird, born and bred in captivity, an artificial person without a scrap of soul.

Nor did its vocal accomplishments recommend it; for being a hen it only chirped, and being very old, it did this drearily. My wife resolved, therefore, to change it. She was offered ninepence for it, and indignantly refused the sum. Finally, she allowed it to go, with seven and sixpence added, in exchange for a young cock bird.

The "linnet" meanwhile had moulted, and as its new

feathers were a long time coming, it came to be looked upon as a shabby creature and the inferior among our pets. It did not resent the invidious comparison nor retaliate for the evident preference shown to the rest, but sitting on its perch at the back window, chuckled good-naturedly to itself all day long, going to sleep early, and growing prodigiously plump.

The bullfinch and canary, however, became soon part of our lives, and every new habit or prettiness was noted and cherished. Both were easily tamed. A friend came in one day, and, going to speak to the bullfinch, was shocked at its wildness.

"Why don't you tame it?" he asked.

"How?" inquired my wife. "I have been trying hard, but I don't think they will ever begin to care for me."

"Oh! starve them," was the reply.

"*Starve* them! never!" said my wife firmly.

But I made a note of the advice, and that very afternoon, as soon as my wife had left the luncheon table, I nearly emptied the seed-boxes into the fire. Next morning my wife noticed, without suspecting anything, how completely the birds had eaten up their allowances. I was of course absorbed in my newspaper. But when my wife went out to do her "housekeeping," I took the liberty of turning round the seed-boxes, so that the birds who meanwhile had been eating voraciously, could get no more. The barbarous fact escaped observation, and

remorse gnawing at my heart, I awaited the morrow with anxiety. Would the birds be tame? But the thought kept recurring to me in the night watches—*would they be dead?* They were not dead, however: on the contrary, they were very much alive. Indeed their extraordinary sprightliness attracted my wife's attention, and all through breakfast she kept drawing my attention to the conversation being kept up by the two birds.

"How happy they are together!" she said. "And how hungry!" I thought.

Breakfast over, she proceeded to attend to her birds, and then the turned boxes were discovered.

"Oh!" she said, "how stupid I have been! Just imagine, these poor birds have had no seed all day!! I forgot to turn their seed boxes round!!!"

I cut short her self-reproaches and expressions of sympathy.

"Never mind, dear: it has done them no harm apparently. Besides, we can see now whether starving does really tame them. Offer the bullfinch a hemp seed in your fingers."

And the great experiment was tried. I approached to watch. The hungry bird recognized his favourite morsel, but the fingers had still terrors for his untutored mind. "Have a little patience," I said, as I saw my wife's face clouding. The bullfinch mind was grievously agitated. He was very hungry, and there close to him was a hemp seed. But then it was in those dangerous-looking hands. An

empty stomach and timid heart fought out the point between them, but the engagement was obstinately contested. The issue trembled a thousand times in the balance. The bullfinch, after sitting for ten minutes with his head very much on one side, would sidle up to the hemp-seed and seem on the very point of taking it, when a movement of the dog on the hearth-rug, or the opening of a door, would startle it into its original alarm. My wife held out bravely, and her patience was suddenly and unexpectedly rewarded. The bullfinch had evidently thought the matter out to the end, and had decided that death by starvation was preferable to tempting the terrors of the pretty fingers that offered him food. He was sitting gloomily at the farther end of the perch. But, on a sudden—perhaps it was a twinge inside—he brightened up, pulled himself together, and with a desperate effort pecked at the seed. He did not get it, but the effort had broken the spell, and he soon returned emboldened, and taking more deliberate aim this time, extracted the prize. After this it was plain sailing, and for the rest of the morning, my wife was busy feeding the domesticated bullfinch from her fingers. Meanwhile, the canary had taken its first lesson, and whether it was that hunger was more overpowering, or that (as has since proved the case) it took the bullfinch for its model, it ate from the hand as if to the manner born. The success was complete, and my wife set apart “to-morrow” for another starvation preparation to further instruction.

But her heart was too soft, and to this day the birds have never been stinted again. Their education, therefore, began and ended together. But I cannot say that I am sorry ; for I can think of no accomplishment that would make them more charming company. The cage doors are always open, and the small creatures spend their day as they choose, the bullfinch climbing about among the picture cords, the canary gazing upon his own reflection in the mirror.

Their characters have developed in this freedom, and their individuality is as comic as it is well defined. The bullfinch, sturdy of body, bull-necked, and thick-legged, ranges the room as if all it contained was his own by right of conquest. There is not an article in it which he does not make use of as a perch or plaything, and in every gesture shows himself at home and in possession. As soon as the loaf is put down on the table, he hops on to it, and when my wife replaces the milk-jug, he perches upon that. From there to the nearest tea cup is only a short hop, and so he makes the round of the breakfast table. When the cloth is removed, he waits, chirping impatiently for his groundsel, and even before it can be arranged for him, he is in the thick of it, his beak stuffed with the flossy flower heads. The bath, meanwhile, is being prepared, and no sooner is it down on the ground, than he perches on the edge, tests his temperature, and pronounces his approval—but does not often bathe. His seed-box has meanwhile been replenished, and in it every

morning are put a few hemp seeds. No sooner is it in the cage, than the bullfinch has gone in, and plunging his head down into the seed, is busy picking out the favourite grains. Lest one should be concealed at the bottom, he jerks out as much of the contents as he can, and deliberately empties the remainder by beakfuls. Satisfied that no hemp seed remains, he comes out, and flying to the nearest picture, commences the gymnastics that occupy the greater part of the day. By sunset he is always back in his cage again, and when my wife goes to shut his door, he opens his beak at her threateningly, showing a ridiculous pink throat, and hissing like a miniature goose. This is not the routine of any particular day, but of every day, and so completely has he asserted his position as one of the family, that the ornaments are arranged in reference to his tastes, and when I talked of removing the picture from over the door, the project was at once thrown aside "for that is Bully's favourite perch."

The canary is a curious contrast. He has as much spirit as the bullfinch, for he resented the first attempt at oppression—it was a question of priority of bathing—with such *elan*, that the bullfinch ceased from troubling, and the two are close friends on the honourable terms of mutual respect. But the canary is conciliatory and retiring. He comes on the breakfast table when it takes his fancy to do so, but he does so unobtrusively, with all the ease of manner that betokens confidence, and yet with all the reserve and modesty of a gentleman. If he

wishes for a crumb he takes it, but instead of hopping on the loaf for it, he reaches it off the platter from the table. His day is spent before a looking-glass, in which he studies his own features and gestures, not unhappily, but quietly, as his way is. A jar that holds "spills" is his usual resort, and perched on it, he exercises himself in the harmless practice of pulling out the spills. He has never succeeded, but this does not damp his industry. For groundsel he has as great a partiality as the bullfinch, but he waits for his share till it is put in his cage, and then only goes in at his leisure. The bath is a passion with him, and his energy in the water fills the bullfinch—who more often makes believe than really bathes—with such amazement, that while the flurry and splash is going on he watches the canary with all his eyes. The canary sings beautifully, not with the student note that in the trained bird makes a room uninhabitable, but a soft, untutored song, that nature whispered to him bar by bar, and so sweet is it that the matter-of-fact bullfinch always listens with attention, until remembering his own powers, he settles down in a ball of feathers on some favourite vase, and chuckles obstinately through a rustic lay. But my wife ought to have written the account of her own birds herself, for she knows them better than I.

And the little things have found out how gentle and loving she is to "God's creatures;" and when the room is quiet, and she is sitting working, the bullfinch will leave off his scrambling among the picture cords, and

the canary his fruitless tugging at the spills, to sit down on her lap and shoulder, and tell her, as they best can, how fond they both are of her.

For me they entertain only a distant regard ; but I like them immensely for all that. At any rate, though I speak of them as "my wife's birds," I should feel hurt if any one thought that they were not *my* birds too.





THE HUNTING OF THE "SOKO."

LYING on my back one terribly hot day under the great tamarind that shades the temple of Saravan, in Borneo, I began to think naturally of iced drinks, and from them my mind wandered to icebergs, and from icebergs to Polar bears.

Polar bears! At the recollection of these animals I sat bolt upright, for though I had shot over nearly all the world, and accumulated a perfect museum of trophies, I had never till this moment thought of Greenland, nor of Polar bears! Before this I had begun to think I had exhausted Nature. From the false elk of Ceylon to the true one of Canada, the rhinoceros of Assam to the coyote of Patagonia, the panther of Central India to the jaguars of the Amazons, I had seen everything in its own home, and shot it there. And for birds, I had hunted a so-called "moa" at Little Farm in New Zealand, the bustard in the Mahratta country, dropped geese into nearly every river of America, Europe, and Asia, and flushed almost all the glorious tribe of game birds, from the capercailzie of Norway to the quail of Sicily. My museum, however, wanted yet another skin

—the Polar bear! I cannot say the prospect pleased me. I would much rather have sent my compliments to the Polar bear and asked it to come comfortably into some warm climate to be shot; but regretting was useless, so I gave the order of the day—the North Pole.

In London, however, I heard of Stanley's successful search for Livingstone, and then it was that the sense of my utter nothingness came over me. All Africa was unshot! It is true I had once gone from Bombay to Zanzibar, Dr. Kirke helping me on my way, and thanks to Mackinnon's agents (who were busy "prospecting" a road into the interior) had bagged my hippopotamus, and enjoyed many a pleasant stalk after the fine antelope of the Bagomoyo plains. But the Dark Continent itself, with its cloud-like herds of hartebeest and springbok, its droves of wind footed gnu, its zebras, ostriches and lions, was still a virgin ground for me. But more than all these—more than ostrich, gnu, or zebra, more than hippopotamus or lion—was that mystery of the primeval forest "the Soko." What was the Soko? Certainly not the gorilla, nor the chimpanzee, nor yet the ourang-outang. Was it a new beast altogether, this man-like thing, that shakes the forest at the sources of the Congo with its awful voice—that desolates the villages of the jungle tribes of Uregga, carries off the women captive, and meets their cannibal lords in fair fight? With Soko on the brain it may be easily imagined

that the Polar bear was forgotten, and I lost no time in altering my arrangements to suit my altered plans. My snow-shoes were countermanded and solah helmets laid in : fur gloves and socks were exchanged for leather gaiters and canvas suits.

In a month I was ready, and in another two months had started from Zanzibar with a following of eighteen men. During my voyage I had carefully read the travels of Grant, Speke, Burton, Livingstone, Cameron, Schweinfurth, and Stanley, and in all had been struck by the losses suffered from fatigue on the march. With large expeditions it was of course necessary for most to go on foot, but with my pigmy *cortege* I could afford to let them ride. Good strong donkeys were cheap at Zanzibar, and I bought a baker's dozen of them, reserving three of the best for myself, and allotting ten among my men, to relieve them either of their burdens or the fatigue of walking, according to any fair arrangements—fair to the donkeys and to themselves—they chose to make among themselves. The result was no sickness, little fatigue, and constant good spirits. My goods consisted of my own personal effects, all on one donkey ; my medicine-chest, &c., on another ; and fifteen men-loads of beads, wire, and cloth, for making friends with the natives and purchasing provisions, and three loads of ammunition. I was lucky in the time of my start, for Mirambo, "the terror of Africa," who had been scouring the centre of the continent for the past year, had just concluded peace with the Arabs his enemies,

and had moreover ordered every one also to keep the peace. The result to me was, that each village was as harmless as the next.

Gaily enough, then, we strolled along, enjoying occasionally excellent sport, and wondering as we went where all the "horrors" and perils of African travel had gone. We had, it is true, our experience of them afterwards, but the ground has now become so stale, that I will pass over the interval of our journey from Zanzibar to Ujiji and thence to the river, and ask you to imagine us setting out for the forests that lie about the sources of the Livingstone in the district of Uregga, the Soko's home.

Nearly every traveller before me had spoken of the "Soko," the man-beast of these primeval forests. Livingstone had a large store of legends and anecdotes about them, their intelligent cruelty and their fierce, though frugivorous, habits. Stanley constantly heard them. In one place he saw a Soko's platform in a tree, and in several villages found the skin, the teeth, and the skulls in possession of the people.

Wherever we went I was eager in my inquiries, but day after day slipped by, and still I neither heard the Soko alive nor saw any portion of one dead. But even without encountering the great simia, our journey in these night-shade forests was sufficiently eventful, for great panther-like creatures, very pale-skinned, prowled about in the glimmering shades, and from the trees we sometimes saw hanging pythons of tremendous girth. But the

reptile and insect world was chiefly in the ascendant here, and it was against such small persecutors as puff-adders, centipedes, poisonous spiders, and ants, that we had to guard ourselves. Travelling, however, owing to the dense shade, was not the misery that we had found it in the sun-smitten plains of Uturu, or the hideous ocean of scrub-jungle that stretches from Suna to Mgongo-Zembo. The trees, nearly all of three or four species of bombax, mvule, and aldrendon, were of stupendous size and impossible altitude, but growing so close together their crowns were tightly interwoven overhead, and sometimes not a hundred yards in a whole day's march was open to the sky. Moreover, in the hot-house air under this canopy had sprung up with incredible luxuriance every species of tree-fern, rattan and creeping palm known, I should think, to the tropics, and amongst themselves in a stratum, often thirty feet below the upper roof of tree-foliage, had closely intermeshed their fronds and tendrils, so that we marched often in an oven atmosphere, but protected alike from the killing sun and flooding rain by double awnings of impenetrable leafage. The ground itself was bare of vegetation, except where, here and there, monster fungi clustered, like a condemned invoice of umbrellas and parasols, round some fallen giant of the forest, or where, in a screen of blossom, wonderful air-plants filled up great spaces from tree trunk to tree trunk.

At intervals we crossed rivulets of crystal water, icy

cold, finding their way as best they might from hollow to hollow over the centuries' layers of fallen leaves, and along their courses grew in rich profusion masses of a broad-leafed sedge, that afforded the panther safe covert and easy couch, and sometimes, on approaching one of these rills, we would see a ghostly herd of deer flit away through the twilight shade. And thus it happened that one evening I was lying on my rug half-asleep, with the pleasant deep-sea gloom about me and a deathly stillness reigning over this world of trees, and wondering whether that was or was not a monkey perched high up among the palm fronds, when out from the sedges by a runnel there paced before me a panther of unusual size. From his gait I saw that it had a victim in view, and turning my head was horrified to see that it was one of my own men, who was busy about something at the foot of a tree.

I jumped up with a shout, and the panther, startled by the sudden sound, plunged back in three great leaps into the sedges from which it had emerged. All my men jumped to their feet, and one of them, in his terror at the proximity of the beast of prey, turned and fled away into the depth of the forest. I watched his retreating figure as far as the eye could follow it in that light, and laughing at his panic, went over to where my ass was tied, intending to stroll down for a shot at the panther. And while I was idly getting ready, the sound of excited conversation among my men attracted me,

and I asked them what was the matter. There was a laugh, and then one of them, the most sensible, *English-minded* African I ever met, stepped forward.

"We do not know, master," said he, "which of us it was that ran away just now. *We are all here.*"

The full significance of his words did not strike me at first, and I laughed too. "Oh, count yourselves," I said, "and you will soon find out."

"But we *have* counted, master," replied the man, "and all eighteen are here."

His meaning began to dawn on me. I felt a queer feeling creep over me.

"*All here!*" I ejaculated. "Muster the men."

And mustered they were—and to my astonishment, and even horror, I found the man was speaking the truth. Every man of my force was in his place.

Then who was the man that had run away, when all the party started up from their sleep? *A ghost?* I looked round into the deepening gloom. All my men were standing together, looking rather frightened. Around us stretched the eternal forest. *A ghost!* And then on a sudden the thought flashed across me—I had seen the Soko.

I had seen the Soko! and seeing it, had mistaken it for a human being! And while I was still loading my cartridge-belt, Shumari, my gun-boy, had crept up to my side, with my express in one hand and heavy elephant rifle in the other; but on his face there was a strange,

concerned expression, and in the tone of his voice an uneasy tremor, with which something in my own feelings sympathized.

"Is the master going to hunt the wild man?" asked the lad.

"The Soko? Yes, I want its skin," I replied.

"But the wild man cried out, '*Ai! ma-ma*' ('Oh! mother, mother') as it ran away and—"

"Here is the wild man's stick," broke in Mabruki, the Zanzibari, and as he spoke he held out towards me a long staff, seven feet in length. All the blood in my body ran cold at the sight of it. It was a mere length of rattan, without ferule or knot, but at the upper end the bark had been torn down from joint to joint in parallel strips, *to give the holder a firmer grip* than one could have had on smooth cane, and just below the second joint the stumps of the corresponding shoots on two sides had been left sticking out *for the hand to rest on.*

How can I describe the throng of hideous thoughts that whirled through my brain on the instant that I recognized these efforts of reason in the animal that I was now going to hunt to the death? But swift as were my thoughts, Mabruki had thought them out before me, and had come to a conclusion. "The mshenshi mtato—pagan ape—has stolen this stick from some village," said he; "see," and he pointed to the smoothed offshoots, "they have stained them with the mvule juice."

The instant relief I felt at this happy solution of the dreadful mystery was expressed by me in a shout of joy, so sudden and so real that, without knowing why, my men shouted too, and with such a will that the monkeys that had been gravely pondering over our preparations for the evening meal were startled out of their self-respect and off their perches, and plunged precipitately into a tangle of lianes. My spirits had returned, and with as light a heart as ever I had, I ambled off in the direction the Soko had taken.

But soon the voices of the camp had died away behind me, and there had grown up between me and it the wall of mist that in this sunless forest region makes every mile as secret from the next as if you were in the highest ether—surely the most secret of all places—or in the lowest sea. And over the soft, rich vegetable mould the ass's feet went noiseless as an owl's wing upon the air; and, except for the rhythmical jingling of his ass's harness, Shumari's presence might never have been suspected. And then, in this cathedral solitude—with cloistered tree-trunks reaching away at every point of view into long vistas closed in grey mist; overhead hanging, like tattered tapestry, great lengths and rags of moss-growths, strange textures of fungus and parasite, hanging plumb down in endless points, all as motionless as possible; without a breath of life stirring about me—bird, beast, or insect—the same horrid thoughts took possession of me again, and I began to recall the

gestures of the wild thing which, when I startled the panther, had fled away into the forest depths.

It had stood upright amongst the upright men, and turning to run had stooped, but only so much as a man might do when running with all his speed. In the gait there was a one-sided swing, just as some great man-ape—gorilla or chimpanzee—might have when, as travellers tell us, they help themselves along on the knuckles of the long fore-arm, the body swaying down to the side on which the hand touches the ground at each stride. In one hand was a small branch of some leafy shrub, for I distinctly remembered having seen it as it began to run. The speed must have been great, for it was very soon out of sight; but there was no *appearance* of rapidity in the movement—like the wolf's slow-looking gallop, that no horse can overtake, and that soon tires out the fleetest hound. As it began to run it had made a jabbering sound—an inarticulate expression of simple human fear I had thought it to be; but now, pondering over it, I began to wonder that I could have mistaken that swiftly retreating figure for human.

It is true that I did not want to think of it as human, and perhaps my wishes may have coloured my retrospect; at any rate, whatever the process, I found myself after a while laughing at myself for having turned sick at heart when the suspicion came across me that perhaps the Soko of the forests of Uregga, the feast-day dish of the jungle tribes, might be a human being. The long,

lolloping gait, the jabbering, should alone have dispelled the terror. It is true that my men heard it say, "Oh! ma-ma" as it started up to run by them. But in half the languages of the world, "mama" is a synonym for "mother," and it follows, therefore, that it is not a word at all, but simply the phonetic rendering of the first bleating, babbling articulation of babyhood—an animal noise, uttered as articulately by young sheep and young goats as by young men and women. The staff, too, was of the common type in these districts, and had been picked up no doubt by the Soko in some twilight prowling round a grain store, or perhaps gained in fair fight from some villager whom it had surprised, solitary and defenceless. And then my thoughts ran on to all I had read or heard of the Soko, of its societies for mutual defence or food supply, and the comparative amiability of such communities—of the solitary, outlawed Soko, the vindictive, lawless bandit of the trees, who wanders about round the habitations of men, lying in wait for the women and the children, robbing the granaries and orchards, and stealing, for the simple larceny's sake, household chattels, of the use of which it is ignorant. Shumari, a hunter born and bred, was full of Soko lore: the skin, he said, was covered except on the throat, hands, and feet, with a short, harsh hair of a dark colour, and tipped, in the older individuals, with grey; these also had long growths of hair on the head, their cheeks and lips. It had no tail.

"Standing up," said he, "it is as tall as I am (he was only 5 feet 1 inch), and its eyes are together in the front of its face, so that it looks at you straight. It eats sitting up, and when tired leans its back against a tree, putting its hands behind its head. Three men of my village came upon one asleep in this way one day, and so quietly, that before it awoke two of them had speared it. It started up and threw back its head to give a loud cry of pain, and then leaning its elbow against the tree, it bent its head down upon its arms, and so died—leaning against the tree, with one arm supporting the head and the other pressed to its heart. There was a Soko village there, for they saw all their platforms in the trees, and the ground was heaped up in places with snail shells and fruit skins. But they did not see any more Sokos.

* * * * Another day I myself was out hunting with a party, and we found a dead Soko. I had thrown my spear at a tree-cat, and going to pick it up, saw close by a large heap of myombo leaves. I turned some up with my spear, and found a dead Soko underneath.

* * * * When a Soko catches a man it holds him, and makes faces at him, and jabbers: sometimes it lets him go without doing him any harm, but generally it bites off all his fingers one by one, spitting them out as it bites them off, and his nose and ears and toes as well, and ends up by strangling him with its fingers or beating him to death with a branch. Women and children are never seen again, so I suppose the Sokos

eat them. They have no spears or knives, and they do not use anything that men use, except that they walk with sticks, knocking down fruit with them, and that they drink water out of their hands. Their front teeth are very sharp, and at each side is one longer and sharper than the rest."

And so he went on chattering to me as we ambled through the dim shade in a stupid pursuit of an invisible thing. The stupidity of it dawned upon me at last, and I stopped, and without explaining the change to my companion, turned and rode homewards.

The twilight shadows of the day were now deepening into night, and we hurried on. The fireflies began to flicker along the sedge-grown rills, and high up, among the leaf coronets of the elais palm, were clustering in a mazy dance. Passing a tangle of lianes, I heard an owl or some night bird hoot gently from the foliage, and as we went along the fowl seemed to keep pace with us, for the ventriloquist sound was always with us, fast though we rode, and first from one side and then from the other we heard the low-voiced complaining following. And the "eeriness" of the company grew upon me. There was no sound of wings or rustling of leaves; but for mile after mile the low *hoot, hoot*, of the thing that was following sounded so close at hand that I kept on looking round. Shumari, like all savages—they approach animals very nearly in this—was intensely susceptible to the superstitious and uncanny, and long

before the ghostliness of the persistent voice occurred to me, I had noticed that Shumari was keeping as close to me as possible. But at last, whether it was from constantly turning my head over my shoulder to see what was coming after us, or whether I was unconsciously infected by his nervousness, I got as fidgety as he, and, for the sake of human company, opened conversation.

“What bird makes that noise?” I asked.

Shumari did not reply, and I repeated the question.

And then in a voice, so absurd from its assumption of boldness that I laughed outright, he said,—

“No bird, master. It is a *muzimu* (spirit) that is following us. Let us go quicker.”

Here was a position! We had all the evening been hunting nothing, and now we were being hunted by nothing! The memory of Shumari’s voice made me laugh again, and just then catching sight of the twinkling camp fires in the far distance, I laughed at myself too. And, on a sudden, just as my laugh ceased, there came from the rattan brake past which we were riding a sound that was, and yet was not, the echo of my laugh. It sounded something like my laugh—but it was repeated twice—and the creature I rode, as though it was, turned its head towards the brake. Shumari meanwhile had seen the camp fires, and his terror overpowering discipline, he gave one howl of horror and fled, his ass, seeing the fires too, falling into the humour with all his will, and carrying off his rider at full speed. My ass

wanted to follow, but I pulled him up, and to make further trial of the hidden jester, shouted out in Swahili, "Who is there?"

The answer was as sudden as horrifying. For an instant the brake swayed to and fro, and then there came a crashing of branches as of some great beast forcing his way through them, and on a sudden, close behind me burst out—the Soko!

Shumari had carried off my guns, and, except for the short knife in my belt, I was defenceless. And there before me in the flesh stood the creature I had gone out to hunt, but which for ever so many miles must have been hunting us. I had no leisure for moralizing or even for examination of the creature before me. It seemed about Shumari's height, but was immensely broad at the shoulders, and in one hand it carried a fragment of a bough. Had it been simply man against man, I would have stood my ground—but *was* it? The dim light prevented my noting any details, and I had no inclination or time to scrutinize the features of the thing that now approached me. I saw the white teeth flashing, heard a deep-chested stuttering, inarticulate with rage, and flinging myself from the ass, which was trembling and rooted to the spot with fear, I ran as I had never run before in the direction of the camp.

The Soko must have stopped to attack the ass, for I heard a scuffle behind me as I started, but very soon the ass came tearing past me, and looking round I saw

the Soko in pursuit. The heavy branch fortunately encumbered its progress, but it gained upon me. Close behind me I heard the thing jabbering and panting, and for an instant thought of standing at bay. I was running my hardest, but it seemed, just as in a nightmare, as if horror had partly paralyzed my limbs, and I were only creeping along. The horror of such pursuit was, I felt, culminating in sickness, and I thought I should swoon and fall. But just then I became aware of approaching lights—the camp fires seemed to be running to me. The Soko, however, was fast overtaking me, and I struggled on, but it was of no use, and my feet tripping against the projecting root of an old mvule, I fell on my knees; but, rising again, I staggered against the tree, drew my knife, and waited for the attack. In an instant the Soko was up with me, and, dropping its bough, reached out its arms to seize me. I lunged at it with my knife, but the length of its arms baffled me, for before the point of my knife could find its body, the Soko's hands had grasped my shoulders, and with such astonishing force that it seemed as if my arms were being displaced in their sockets. The next moment a third hand seized hold of my leg below the knee, and I was instantly jerked on to the ground. The fall partially stunned me, and then I felt a rough-haired body fall heavily upon me, and, groping their way to my throat, long fingers feeling about me. I struggled with the creature, but against its strength my hands were nerveless.

The fingers had now found my throat; I felt the grasp tightening, and gave myself up to death. But on a sudden there was a confusion of voices—a flashing of bright lights before my eyes—and the weight was all at once raised from off me. In another minute I had recovered my consciousness, and found that my men, the gallant Mabruki at their head, had charged to my rescue with burning brands, and arrived only just in time to save my life.

And the Soko?

As I lay there, my faithful followers round me with their brands still flickering, the voice of the Soko came to us, but from which direction it was impossible to say, soft and mysterious as before, the same *hoot, hoot*, that had puzzled us so on our homeward route.

My narrow escape from a horrible, though somewhat absurd, death, was celebrated by my men with extravagant demonstrations of indignation against the Soko that had hunted me, and many respectful reproaches for my temerity. For myself, I was more eager than ever to capture or kill the formidable thing that had outwitted and outmatched me; and so having had my arms well rubbed with oil, I gave the order for a general muster next morning for a grand Soko hunt.

Now, close by our camp grew a great tree, from which hung down liane strands of every rope-thickness, and all round its roots had grown up a dense hedge of strong-spined cane. One of my men, sent up the tree to cut us

off some of these natural ropes, reported that all round the tree, that is, between its trunk and the cane-hedge, there was a clear space, so that though, looking at it from the outside, it seemed as if the canes grew right up to the tree trunk, looking at it from above, there was seen to be really an open pathway, so to speak, surrounding the tree, broad enough for three men to walk abreast. I had often heard of similar cases of vegetable aversions, where, from some secret cause of plant prejudice, two shrubs, though growing together, exercise this mutual repulsion, and never actually combine in growth. Meanwhile, however, the phenomenon was interesting to me for other reasons, for I saw at once what a convenient receptacle this natural "well" would make for the baggage we had to leave behind.

Leaving our effects therefore inside this brake, which we did by slinging the bales one after the other over an overhanging bough, and so dropping them into the open pathway, and removing from the neighbourhood every trace of our recent encampment, we started westward with four days' provisions ready cooked on our backs. The method of march was in line, each man about a hundred yards from the next, and every second man on an ass, the riders carrying the usual ivory horns, without which no travellers in the Uregga forests ever move from home, and the notes of which, exactly like the cry of the American wood-marmot, keep the party in line. By this means we covered a mile, and being unencum-

bered, marched fast, scouring the wood before us at the rate of four miles an hour for three hours.

And what a wild, weird time it was those three hours, marching with noiseless footfalls, looking constantly right and left and overhead. I could see the line of shadowy figures advancing on either side, not a sound along the whole line, except when the horns carried down in response to one another their thin, wailing notes, or when some palm fruit over-ripe dropped rustling down through the canopy of foliage above us. And yet the whole forest was instinct with life. If you set yourself to listen, there came to your ears, all day and night, a great monotone of sound humming through the misty shade, the aggregate voices of millions of insect things, that had their being among the foliage or in the daylight that reigned in the outer world above those green clouds which made perpetual twilight for us who were passing underneath. Along the tree roof streamed also troops of monkeys, and flocks of parrots and other birds; but in their passage overhead, we could not, through the dense vault of foliage, branch, and blossom, hear their voices, except as merged in the one great sound that filled all space, too large almost to be heard at all. In the midst, then, of this vast murmur of confused nature, we seemed to walk in absolute silence. The ear had grown so accustomed to it, that a sneeze was heard with a start, and the occasional knocking together of asses' hoofs made every head turn suddenly, and every rifle move to the shoulder.

At the end of the three hours' marching, we came to a river—perhaps that which Stanley, in his "Dark Continent," names the Asna—flowing north-west, with a width here of only 100 yards—a deep, slow stream, crystal clear, flowing without a ripple or a murmur through the perpetual gloaming, between banks of soft, rich, black leaf-mould. We halted, and, after a rapid meal, re-formed in line, and marching for two miles easterly up the river, made a left wheel; and in the same order, and at the same pace as we had advanced, we continued nearly two hours rather in a northerly direction; and then making a left wheel again, started off due west, crossing the tracks of our morning's march in our fourth mile, and reaching the Asna again in our tenth mile—a total march of nearly thirty-two miles, of which, of course, each man had traversed only one half on foot. No cooking was allowed, and our collation was therefore soon despatched, and before I had lighted my pipe, and curled myself up, I saw that all the party were snug under their mosquito nets.

I had noticed, when reading travellers' books, that they always suffered severely from mosquitos and other insects. I determined that *I* would not; so, before leaving Zanzibar, served out to every man twenty yards of net. These in the daytime were worn round the head as turbans, and at night spread upon sticks, and furnished each man a protection against these Macbeths of the sedge and brake. The men thoroughly understood their value,

and before turning in for the night, always carefully examined their nets for stray holes, which they caught together with fibres. But, somehow, I could not go to sleep for a long while ; the pain in my arm where the Soko seized me was very great at times, besides, I felt "haunted ;" and indeed, when I awoke and found it already four o'clock, it did not seem that I had been to sleep at all. But the time for sleep was now over ; so awakening the expedition, we ate a silent meal, and noiselessly remounting, were again on the war trail. On this, the second day, we marched some three miles down the river, north-west, and then, taking a halt right wheel, started off north-east, passing to the north of our camp at about the eleventh mile. Here the first sign of life we had seen since we started broke the tedium of our ghost-like progress.

Between myself and the next man on the line was running a little stream, fed probably by the dews that here rained down upon us from the mvule-trees. These, more than all others, seem to condense the heated upper air, their leaves being thick in texture and curiously cool—for which reason the natives prefer them for butter- and oil-dishes—and along the stream, as usual, crowded a thick fringe of white-starred sedge. On a sudden, there was a swaying of the herbage, and out bounced a splendidly spotted creature of the cat kind. Immediately behind him crept out his mate ; and there they stood—the male, his crest and all the hair along the spine erect with

anger at our intrusion, his tail swinging and curling with excitement ; beside him, and half behind him, the female crouching low on the ground, her ears laid back along the head, and motionless as a carved stone. My ass saw the pair, and instinct warning it that the beautiful beasts were dangerous to it, with that want of judgment and consideration so characteristic of asses, it must needs bray. And such a bray ! At every *hee* it pumped up enough air from its lungs to have contented an organ, and at every *haw* it vented a shattering blast, to which all the Slogans of all the Clans were mere puling. It brayed its very soul out in the suddenness of the terror. The effect on the leopards was instant and complete. There was just one lightning flash of colour—a yellow streak across the space before me, and plump ! the splendid pair soused into a murderous tangle of creeping palms. That they could ever have got out of the awful trap, with its millions of strong spines, barbed like fish-hooks, and as strong as steel, is probably impossible ; but the magnificent promptitude of the suicide, its picturesque completeness, was undeniable.

The ass, however, was by no means soothed by the meteor-like disappearance of the beasts of prey, and the gruesome dronings, that in spite of hard whacks, it indulged in for many minutes, betrayed the depth of its emotions and the cavernous nature of its interior organization. The ass, like the savage, has no perception of the picturesque.

After the morning meal I allowed a three hours' rest, and in knots of twos and threes along the line, the party sat down, talking in subdued tones (for silence was the order of the march), or comfortably snoozing. I slept myself as well as my aching arm would let me. The march resumed, I wheeled the line with its front due west, and after another two hours' rapid advance we found ourselves again at the river, some seven miles farther down its course than the point from which we had started in the morning; and after a hurried meal, I gave the order for "home." Striking south-easterly, we crossed in our fifth mile the track of the morning, and in the thirteenth reached our camp. By this means it will be seen we had effectually triangulated a third of a circle of eleven miles radius from our camp—and with absolutely no result. During the next two days I determined to scour, if possible, the remaining semicircle. Meanwhile, we were at the point we had started from, and though it was nearly certain that at any rate one Soko was in the neighbourhood, we had fatigued ourselves with nearly seventy miles of marching, without finding a trace of it.

As nothing was required from our concealed store, we had only to eat and go to sleep; and so the men, after laughing together for a while over the snug arrangements I had made for the safety of our goods, and pretending to have doubts as to this being the real site of the hidden property of the expedition, were soon asleep in a batch. I went to sleep too; not a sound sleep, for I could not

drive from my memory the hideous recollection of that evening, only two days before, when, nearly in the same spot, I was lying in the Soko's power. And thinking about it, I got so restless that, under the irresistible impression that some supernatural presence was about me, I unpegged my mosquito net, and getting up, began to pace about. I wore at nights a long Cashmere dressing-gown, in lieu of the tighter canvas coat. I had been leaning against a tree ; but feeling that the moisture that trickled down the trunk was soaking my back, I was moving off, when my ears were nearly split by a shout from behind me—"Soko! Soko!" and the next instant I found myself flung violently to the ground, and struggling with—Mabruki! The pain caused by the sudden fall at first made me furious at the mistake that had been made ; but the next instant, when the whole absurdity of the position came upon me, I roared with laughter.

The savage is very quickly infected by mirth, and in a minute, as soon as the story got round how Mabruki had jumped upon "the master" for a Soko, the whole camp was in fits of laughter. Sleep was out of the question with my aching back and aching sides ; and so, mixing myself some grog and lighting my pipe, I made Mabruki shampoo my limbs with oil. While he did so he began to talk,—

"Does the master ever see devils?"

"Devils? No."

"Mabruki does, and all the Wanyamwazi of his village

do, for his village elders are the keepers of the charm against evil spirits of the whole land of Unyamwazi, and they often see them. I saw a devil to-night."

"Was the devil like a Soko?" I asked, laughing.

"Yes, master," he replied, "like a Soko; but I was always asleep, and never saw it, but whenever it came to me it said, 'I am here,' and then at last I got frightened and got up, and then I saw you master and—"

But we were both laughing again, and Mabruki stopped.

It was strange that he, too, should have felt the same uncanny presence that had afflicted me. But, under Mabruki's manipulation, I soon fell asleep. I awoke with a start. Mabruki had gone. But much the same inexplicable, restless feeling that men say they have felt under ghostly visitations, impelled me to get up, and this time, lighting a pipe to prevent mistakes, I resumed my sauntering, and tired at last of being alone, I awoke my men for the start, although day was not yet breaking. Half-asleep a meal was soon discussed, and in an hour we were again on the move. Shumari had lagged behind, as usual, and on his coming up I reproved him for being "the last."

"I am not the last," he said; "Zaidi, the Wangwana, is not here yet. I saw him climbing up for a liane" (the men got their ropes from these useful plants) "just as I was coming away, and I called out to him that you would be angry."

"Peace!" said Baraka, the man next to me; "is not that Zaidi the Wangwana there, riding on the ass? It was not he. It was that good for nothing Tarya. He is always the last to stand up and the first to sit down."

"No doubt, then," said Shumari, "it was Tarya; shame on him. He is no bigger than Zaidi, and has hair like his. Besides, it was in the mist I saw him."

But I had heard enough—the nervousness of the night still afflicted me.

"Sound the halt!" I cried; "call the men together."

In three minutes all were grouped round me—not one was missing! Tarya was far ahead, riding on an ass, and had therefore been one of the first to start.

"Who was the last to leave camp?" I asked, and by the unanimous voice it was agreed to be Shumari himself.

Shumari, then, had seen the Soko! and our store-house was the Soko's home!

The rest of the men had not heard the preceding conversation, so putting them in possession of the facts, I gave the order for returning to our camp. We approached. I halted the whole party, and binding up the asses' mouths with cloths, we tied them to a stout liane, and then dividing the party into two, led one myself round to the south side of the camp by a *détour*, leaving the other about half a mile to the north of it, with orders to rush towards the cane brake and surround it at a hundred yards' distance as soon as they heard my bugle. Passing swiftly round, we were

soon in our places, and then deploying my men on either side so as to cover a semi-circle, I sounded the bugle. The response came on the instant, and in a few minutes there was a cordon round the brake at 100 yards radius, each man about twenty yards or so from the next. But all was silent as the grave. As yet nothing had got through our line I felt sure; and if therefore Shumari had indeed seen the Soko, the Soko was still within the circle of our guns. A few tufts of young rattan grew between the line and the brake in the centre of which were our goods, and unless it was up above us, hidden in the impervious canopy overhead, where *was* the Soko? A shot was fired into each tuft, and in breathless excitement the circle began to close in upon the brake.

"Let us fire!" cried Mabruki.

"No, no!" I shouted, for the bullets would perhaps have whistled through the lianes amongst ourselves. "Catch the Soko alive if you can."

But first we had to sight the Soko, and this, in an absolutely impenetrable clump of rope-thick creepers, was impossible, except from above.

Shumari, as agile as a monkey, was called, and ordered to climb up the tree, the branches of which had served us to sling our goods into the brake, and to see if he could espy the intruder. The lad did not like the job; but with the pluck of his race obeyed, and was soon slung up over the bough, and creeping along it, overhung the centre of the brake. All faces were upturned towards

him as he peered down within the wall of vegetation. For many minutes there was silence, and then came Shumari's voice,—

“No, master, I cannot see the Soko.”

“Climb on to the big liane,” called out Mabruki. The lad obeyed, and made his way from knot to knot of the swinging strand. One end of it was rooted into the ground at the foot of the tree inside the cane brake, the other, in cable thickness, hanging down loose within the circle. We, watching, saw him look down, and on the instant heard him cry,—

“Ai ! ma-ma ! the Soko, the Soko !” and while the lad spoke we saw the hanging creeper violently jerked, and then swung to and fro, as if some creature of huge strength had hold of the loose end of it and was trying to shake Shumari from his hold.

“Help ! help, master !” cried Shumari. “I am falling ;” and then he lost his hold, and fell with a crash down into the brake, and for an instant we held our breath to listen—but all was quiet as death. The next instant, at a dozen different points, axes were at work clearing the lianes. For a few minutes nothing was to be heard but the deep breathing of the straining men and the crashing of the branches ; and then on a sudden, at the side farthest from me, came a shout and a shot, a confused rush of frantic animal noises, and the sounds of a fierce struggle.

In an instant I was round the brake, and there lay Shumari, apparently unhurt, and the Soko—dying !

"Untie his hands," I said. This was done, and the wounded thing made an effort to stagger to its feet.

A dozen arms thrust it to the ground again. "Let him rise," I said; "help him to rise," and Mabruki helped the Soko on to its feet.

Powers above! If this were an ape, what else were half my expedition? The wounded wood-thing passed its right arm round Mabruki's neck, and taking one of his hands, pressed it to its own heart. A deep sob shook its frame, and then it lifted back its head and looked in turn into all the faces round it, with the death glaze settling fast in its eyes. I came nearer, and took its hand as it hung on Mabruki's shoulder. The muscles, gradually contracting in death, made it seem as if there was a gentle pressure of my palm, and then—the thing died.

Life left it so suddenly that we could not believe that all was over. But the Soko was really dead, and close to where he lay I had him buried.

"Master said he wanted the Soko's skin," said Shumari, in a weak voice, reminding me of my words of a few days before.

"No, no," I said; "bury the wild man quickly. We shall march at once."





THE LEGEND OF THE BLAMELESS PRIEST.¹

YEARS upon years ago, when all the world was young, when Atlantis was among the chief islands of it, and the Aryans had not yet descended from their cradle on the Roof of the World, there wandered up past the sources of the sleepy Nile the patriarch Kintu, and his wife. For many months he travelled, he and his old wife, their one she-goat, and one cow, and carrying with them one banana and one sweet potato. And they were alone in their journey.

From out the leagues of papyrus fen the ibis and the flamingo screamed, and through the matete-canes the startled crocodile plunged under the lily-covered waves. Overhead circled and piped vast flocks of strange waterfowl, puzzled by the sight of human beings, and from the path before them the sulky lion hardly turned away.

¹ In this legend I make only a partial claim to originality, for it is founded upon the notes taken in Uganda by Mr. H. M. Stanley, and will be found already partially worked out in that traveller's "Across the Dark Continent," which it fell to my pleasant lot to edit.

The hyænas in the rattan brakes snarled to see them pass, and, wailing through the forests that covered the face of the land, came the cry of the lonely lemur. A dreary, desolate country, rich in flowers and fruit, and surpassingly beautiful, but desolate of man.

The elephant was the noblest in the land, and on the water there was none to stand before the river-horse.

And so they plodded on, old Kintu and his wife, until coming to where the Victoria Nyanza spreads its summer sea through four degrees of latitude, flecked with floating groves, "purple isles of Eden," the patriarch halted, and, the first time for many years, laid down his staff upon the ground. And the mark of the staff may still be seen, eight cubits in length, lying like a deep scar across the basalt boulders piled up on the western shore of the great lake. And then his wife laid down her burden, the one banana and the one potato, and the goat and the cow lay down, for they were all weary with the journey of half a century, during which they had never rested night nor day. And the name they gave the land they stayed at was Uganda, but the name of the land they came from no one knows.

And then Kintu cut the banana and potato into many little pieces, and planted them, each piece twenty miles apart, and they grew so fast that the plants seemed to the eye to be crawling over the ground. And his wife had many sons and daughters, and they were all born adult, and inter-

married, so that in a few years all the country was filled with people. The cow and the goat also brought forth adult offspring, and these multiplied so fast that in the second generation every man in the land had a thousand head of cattle. And Kintu was their king, and his people called him "The Blameless Priest ;" for he wronged no one. In his land no blood was ever shed, for he had forbidden his people to eat meat, and when any sinned they were led away by their friends, the man with a woman, for a thousand miles, and left there with cuttings of the banana and the potato ; for they never led any one away alone, lest he should die ; and once every year, after the gathering of the harvest, Kintu sent messengers to the exiles to know how they did. So the land was at peace from morning to night, and there was plenty in every house. And the patriarch moved about among his people in spotless robes of white, and loved and honoured by all as their father.

But after a long time the young men and women grew wicked, for they found out the secret of making wine from the banana and strong drink from the palm fruit and fire-water from the mtama grain ; and with this they got drunk together, and when they were drunk they forgot that they were Kintu's children. And first of all they began to dress in bright colours, and then they killed the cattle for food, until at last Kintu was the only man in all his kingdom who was dressed in spotless white, and who had never shed blood. And the wickedness

increased ; for having killed animals they began to fight among themselves, and at last one day a man of Uganda, having got drunk with palm wine, killed one of his tribe with a spear. And the people rose up with a cry, and every man took his spear in his hand, and the whole land of Uganda was in an uproar, the people killing one another. But when it was all over, and the morning came, they saw the dead men lying about among the melon plants, and were frightened, for they had never seen dead men before, and did not know what to do with them ; and then they looked about for the patriarch, whom all this while they had forgotten ; and lo ! he was gone.

And no one would tell them whither.

Till at last a little girl child spoke up : " I saw Kintu and his wife go out of the gate in the early morning, and with them they took a cow and a goat, a banana and a potato ; and Kintu said, ' This land is black with blood.' I ran after them, and with me was only my little brother Pokino, and he and I watched Kintu and his wife go away down by the wood to the river that comes from the west."

The children had been the last to see Kintu ; for though every one was asked, no one had seen the Blameless Priest go forth except the little ones, Saramba, with the round eyes, and her baby brother Pokino.

Then the people were in great consternation, and ran hither and thither, looking for the patriarch ; but he was

never found. And when the tumult of the first lamentation was over, Chwa, the eldest son of Kintu, took his shield and spear, and going out into the market-place, shook his spear before the assembled chiefs, and struck his spear upon his shield to show that he was king. And he made all the nation into castes, and to two castes he gave the duty of finding Kintu. Far and near they sought him, crossing strange rivers and subduing many tribes; but the lost patriarch was never seen. And when Chwa was dead, his son shook his spear before the people, and searched for Kintu all his life, and died without finding him. And thirty-eight kings ruled in succession over Uganda, but never again did human eye behold the man they sought.



Then Ma'anda came to the throne. He was different from all the kings that had preceded him, for he robed himself in white, and no blood might be shed within a mile's distance of his palace, and no man who had killed an animal might come within a spear's throw of his person. He was kind to all, to animals and to men alike, and they called him in Uganda "the good father." He had given up the search for Kintu, for he knew it was hopeless; but once a year he called all the chiefs together, and warned them that until they gave up fighting among themselves and warring with other tribes, they could never hope to see the Blameless Priest again.

Now, one day Ma'anda dreamed strangely, and rising

before dawn, went to his mother and said : " I dreamt in the night that a peasant came to me from the forest and told me something that filled me with joy, but what it was I cannot remember."

She asked, " When did the peasant come ? "

He answered, " Just as the hyæna was crying for the third time."

She said, " But that is not yet."

And lo ! as she spoke, from the mtama crop the hyæna cried for the third time—for the day was breaking—and Ma'anda's mother said, " Get ready quickly, and take your spear, for I can hear the peasant coming, and he has strange news to tell you, my son." Ma'anda could hear nothing ; yet he went away to get ready to receive the messenger. But at the door he met the Katekiro, the chief officer of his household, who said, " There is a madman without, who says he has news for the king. He is only a peasant, but will not go away, for he says that the king must hear his news."

" Let him come in," said the king. And the peasant entered.

" What is it ? " asked Ma'anda.

" I may not tell any one but the king and the king's mother : which are they ? "

So the king took the peasant into his mother's house, and having carefully seen that no one was listening, the peasant told his tale.

" I went last night to cut wood in the forest, and being

overtaken by the darkness, lay down to sleep by my wood. And in my sleep a person came to me and said, 'Follow me,' and I took up my bill-hook and went with him. And we came to an open space in the forest, and in the open space I saw an old man sitting, and beside him, on either hand, stood a number of old men, all with spears in their hands, and they seemed to have just come from a long march. And though it was dark in the forest, it was quite light where the old men were; and the old man who was sitting said to me, 'Go to Ma'anda the king and tell him to come to me with his mother. But let him take care that no one else, not even his dog, follows him. For I have that to tell him which will make him glad, and that to show him that no king of Uganda has yet been able to find.' So I laid down my bill-hook and my head-cloth where I was standing, and I turned and ran swiftly from fear, and I did not stop till I reached the palace. Oh, great king, live for ever."

"Show the way," replied Ma'anda, "and we will follow."

So they stole out those three—the peasant, the king, and his mother—and, thinking they were unperceived, crept away from the palace through the fence of the matete, before the sun rose and the people were up. But the Katekiro had watched them, and seeing the king go out with only the peasant and his mother, said to himself, "There is some treachery here. I will follow the king, so that no harm may befall him."

And they all went fast through the forest together,

and though the king kept turning round to see if any one was following, the Katekiro managed to keep always out of sight, for the king's eyes were dim with age. And at last Ma'anda was satisfied that no one was behind them, and hurried on without looking back. And at evening they came to the spot, and the peasant was afraid to go on. But he pointed before him, and the king looking, saw a pale light through the trees, and between the trees he thought he saw the figures of men robed in white, moving to and fro. And he advanced slowly towards the light, and as he got nearer it increased in brightness, and then on a sudden he found himself in the glade, and there before him sat the old man surrounded by his aged warriors, and at his feet lay the wood-cutter's bill-hook and head-cloth. Ma'anda stood astonished at the sight, and held his spear fast; but a voice came to his ears, so gentle and so soft, that his doubts all vanished, and he came forward boldly.

"Who art thou?" asked the old man.

"I am Ma'anda, the king."

"Who was the first king of Uganda?"

"Kintu."

"Then come nearer, for I have something to tell thee—but why didst thou let any one come with thee except the peasant and thy mother?"

"No one is with me," replied Ma'anda; "I kept looking behind me as I came, and I am sure that no one followed us."

"Well, then, come here and look me in the face. I have something to tell thee from Kintu, and thou shalt thyself see Kintu to-day; but first—why didst thou let any man follow thee?"

And Ma'anda, who was impatient, answered quickly,—
"No one followed me."

"But a man *did* follow thee," replied the old man, "and there he stands!" pointing with his finger to the Katekiro, whose curiosity had drawn him forth from his hiding. Seeing himself discovered, he stepped forward to the side of the king.

Then Ma'anda's wrath overwhelmed him, and for the first time in his life he raised his hand to strike. And his spear pierced the Katekiro to the heart, who fell with a cry at his feet. At the horror of his deed and his own blood-splashed robe, Ma'anda sprang back, and for an instant covered his face with his hands in an agony of sorrow.

And when he opened his eyes again the forest was all dark, and the old man and his chiefs had vanished!

Nor from that day to this has any one in Uganda seen the "Blameless Priest."





SIGHT-SEEING.

A QUASI-SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

DO you like railway travelling? It is a question upon which the best of friends may disagree mortally ; but for myself, here in India, I confess that I like it—when I can travel with a servant who understands the cooling of drinks. As the train proceeds I feel that I am not idle, however idle I may really be ; for after all, what more can I do than sit comfortably back in my seat and be carried along? That the idleness is enforced makes me feel all the more busy, at any rate all the less idle, and while I sit doing nothing, I can luxuriously affect to deplore the absence of active employment.

One o'clock of the morning “by Madras time,” and the Mail Train North snorting and fizzing impatiently in the Allahabad station.

But what a gross impostor a train is ! To the inexperienced traveller it seems as if there was hardly time to fling into the carriage the more valuable portions of your luggage, and to plunge after it yourself, before you

are whisked off. But the better informed know that the engine is only showing off. Go and drink a cup of coffee at your leisure at one of the marble tables in the refreshment-room yonder, and tell your bearer meanwhile to make up your bed in the carriage, and when you have done all this, you will still find that the engine-driver is saying "good-night"—that the Mail Train North has no intention of starting before the proper time. Everybody in this part of India pretends to set great store by "Madras time," but no one sets his watch by it. It is only an official formula.

I have many reasons for preferring to travel "first-class," for, setting aside all the more obvious advantages of doing so, it pleases me to be "salaamed" to by the police-constable with the baggy blue trousers, and shoes so big that he always has to take them off before he can run after a thief. He salaams only to first-class passengers. I am neither less nor more than a man, and, thereby vindicating the Ettrick Shepherd, I like flattery. It gives me pleasure to be mistaken for a Member of Council, or a Railway Director. If such could be bought with money, I would lay out a considerable portion of my income in a false appearance, so that I might at all times receive the homage of a dignitary in the land. I like too, to be thought prosperous, for prosperity brings out my finer qualities. I am then pleased to condescend, and the poor have a friend in me. I set my face against tyranny, and scowl—a whole

Directorate looks out angrily from my eye—at the constable whom I see misleading a native passenger by oracular speech. He catches my eye and mistakes me, doubtless, for the Agent of the Railway, whereat I relax my frown, and for this one occasion overlook his conduct. But he reads it in my eye that he had better not let me detect him again in the graceless act of bewildering a rustic.

In prosperity, too, I say my prayers gratefully ; when happy, I am found in church on Sundays. But in adversity, thinking that my “kismet” is adverse, I become a vagabond. I secrete then no human kindness, holding the world to be at odds with me, and myself the weaker of the two. I am not chastened by hard times. They irritate me to revolt. I can have no patience with misfortune. Why should we play the hypocrite and obsequiously welcome hard times, quoting Seneca to make believe we agree with him ? Adversity has, at any rate, no “optabilia” for me.

But at last the long leg of the station clock is close upon the short leg, halting at one. The engine-driver has drunk the tumbler of farewell to the last drop, and has eaten the sugar at the bottom with a spoon ; even the fat native has got his ticket, and after many violent but ineffectual efforts to get into a horse-box, has been thrust into his carriage. The bell-ringer jerks his instrument as if he really meant it this time ; the bustle suddenly ceases, the whistle sounds, everybody steps back,

and the train—this impatient, panting monster, that seemed fifteen minutes ago about to run away—this huge creature which for the last hour has been pawing the ground, and fidgetting to be off—is no sooner encouraged to proceed than it jibs and backs guard-first out of the station! Yes, it is a fact: the Mail Train North has started for Calcutta; but it soon thinks better of it, and with a sudden plunge rushes back past the platform. A streak of lamplight and faces, and then we are out into the dark night.

The long lines of black smoke lie parallel on the damp night air, and great festoons of vapour float past the windows on one side; from the other, the trees show in the moonlight like hill ranges on the horizon and the shrubs like bisons. The earth appears of a silver white, the colour of a mackerel's stomach, except where the water-pools glisten, and the night glimmer reveals the stealthy jackals drinking, or where the flooded ditches reflect the glare of the passing train. And now a station comes sliding along towards us, the train goes more slowly forward to meet it, the telegraph-posts pass in sober procession, the trees assume a vegetable shape, and we are once more among our fellow-beings.

There is the station-master with a blue paper in his hand; the guard, who before you have gone a hundred miles, you will recognize at each station as an old friend; the six natives who were always going to be left behind, or who think they are; the *bhistie* offering water to those

who don't want any, but deaf to the yells which issue from the darkness where the third-class carriages are standing. There is the station Babu, a thin, sharp-faced, under-sized being, whose explanations drive distracted the sore-footed villager who has just tramped in, and wishes to take a ticket to some place at which the train does not stop; and who bustles his wife—she looks like a great fly that some greater spider has swathed in web, or like the cocoon of some monster tissue-weaving caterpillar—hither and thither as if she were a bale of inferior piece-goods. But there is little time for delay. The blood of the iron horse is up, and it is snorting to be off; the whistle screams, and the engine, as if it had taken fright, bolts, leaving the rustic with his chrysalis wife trying to explain to the inattentive Babu and to the bhstie the whereabouts of the village whither he had hoped to travel. And so on through the dim night. Long reaches of grey country, sudden interruptions of bricks and mortar, human voices, and banging of doors.

Rapid motion naturally generates rapid thought—and of a jerky kind. I never think so much as when in a railway train, but I wish I could write when my thoughts are hot. It must be a great relief to let blood from the brain with a pen as some can do. Indeed, what a pleasure it must be to do things at the right time, and as soon as a thought walks into your head to lead it out courteously on to paper, and there leave it for ever. It could never come back to bother you. As it is, I

have certain thoughts which are for ever overtaking me. In the railway they afflict me. One, for instance, is the obstinate contrariety of the native. Even in small things we are antipodes. Whatever an Englishman will do standing, a native will do sitting. The former beckons by moving his finger upwards; the latter by pawing the air downwards. We chirrup to a horse to make it go, a native chirrups to it to make it stop. When an Englishman has been using an umbrella, he rests it against the wall handle upwards; but a native puts it handle downwards. We blow our noses with our right hand, wiping them downwards; they with their left hand, and rub their noses upwards. If we wish to put a thing down, we do so on the nearest table; a native, if undisturbed, puts a thing down—on the ground. We write from left to right, they (most of them) from right to left: the leaves of our books turn to the left, but when we read in native books they turn to the right. In civilized places the shepherd drives his sheep before him; here he makes one of the flock, or goes in front. Even the birds are contrary to Western nature. The robins of England have red on their breasts, in India they wear their red under their tails. But the list would never end if I could remember all the instances that have at different times passed under the roller of my brain-press. But somehow the type never happened to be inked.

Again, when travelling I cannot help wondering whe-

ther I myself in the train am not a very exact illustration of the British in India. Here am I, "an heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time," travelling in an isolated fragment of western civilization, at railroad speed, through a heathen and ignorant country. I have no time to speak to the natives waiting at the level crossing. I am going too fast. If I could, they would not understand or sympathize with me. So they catch only a glimpse of me; think the train very wonderful, but unnecessary; understand nothing, and keep their ignorance to themselves. A rush and a screech, and the train is out of sight. The gate swings open and the ekkas jingle across the line, just as they jingled along in the time of Akbar, and as if the metals were not still warm with the rush of a passing train. The people in the fields will hardly turn to look at the steam-angel. Why, in any English shire, with a train passing every two hours, the sweating labourer rests a moment with his foot upon the spade "to see the train pass;" but here, with only one train a day, and that on but one line, the ryot, fingering the weeds, sits with his back to the train—crouched on the ground like a big frog, his arms straight out before him, and his elbows resting on his knees—and pays no tribute to science.

Looking out of the window of a train is of itself to me a source of great enjoyment, and as long as my pipe holds out, I can sit there well-employed. It is wonderful how orderly the wild world is. How, without

bidding, all nature moves along in its appointed way, each creature fulfilling with all its might the purposes of its creation—for Pan is here in India still king of the country-side. The plover with the crescent of white across its wings, sweeps from marsh to marsh, diligently intent on froglings, and the dainty little snippet searches the reeds by the puddle side as studiously as if the world had nothing in it but lob-worms. The hawk with the russet head hovers long and high ; its sight is keen, and in its swoop is death. The mynas fight on the hillock for their dames without thought to spare for the world beyond themselves, and the hungry wolf sulks low in the babool's shade, wondering why the sun should shine so long.

A hundred miles gone ! *Been asleep ?* Did any one ever confess with a good grace to having been asleep in a train ? Before you start you take pains to explain how very irksome railway travelling is to you, how you always find the greatest difficulty in closing your eyes, and how the carriages on every line you are going to travel on are each and severally the most uncomfortable carriages on any line. How, then, can you be expected to confess that four minutes after you lay down on your bed with a grumble at the motion, the night lamp, and Board of Directors—just one minute after you wound up your watch—that you fell asleep, and that you have been sleeping ever since ? O, course you remember all the stations ; also, o, course, it is very distinctly in your recollection how on five different occasions you spoke to

your fellow-passenger, and found him fast asleep, "snoring I assure you, awfully." You did at one time close your eyes, you allow, and this is why, when the lamp was shining full on your up-turned face, your fellow-passenger made the mistake of supposing you were asleep.



Asleep or not asleep, however, the night has been passed, and the train has brought us to Cawnpore. In England, men remember Cawnpore as the Place of the Well ; but in India it is known as the metropolis of the hunters of the mighty boar. The beautiful gardens have long ago smothered up in flowers and foliage the memory of '57. Looked at from the train, the adjuncts of Cawnpore are very much like the adjuncts of Allahabad. The same woman in red-stained clothes is going to the well with her glittering lotahs on her head ; the same man is sauntering across to his work in the fields—a white cloth flung loosely round and over him ; the crops are the same, the trees and the pariah dogs, the kine and the muddy buffaloes. But there are differences. The babul trees beyond Cawnpore grow in fine avenues ; the ditches are filled full with plumes of grass-blossom, satin white ; in every hollow along the rails for many a mile it lies thick, hardly allowing the water-roses to show their pink blossoms, hardly allowing the water-lilies room for their flat leaves and many-petalled flowers to float, affording a safe covert for the pied snippet and careful egrets. The train had gone perhaps a mile, our pipes were hardly

re-lit, when, looking from the window I saw come forth from a mud-walled hamlet into the keen morning air a poor procession of mourners, and a woman in a green kirtle stood watching them, shading her eyes with her hand, as they passed with their light burden towards the mango tope across the fields. Three men carrying away a dead child, a little brother running with short steps alongside : in his hand a potsherd filled with fire. That was all. The pyre will be on the river's bank away beyond those old mango trees, from whose boughs the family for four generations have gathered their scanty income. Surely the story of the death was that beautiful one in the Book of Kings :—"It fell on a day the child went out to his father, to the reapers. And he said unto his father, 'My head, my head.' And the father said to a lad, 'Carry him to his mother.' And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon,—and then died." But there is no Elisha here, and so the child of the Hindu woman is for ever dead. The faquir with the matted locks who exacts the reverence of the ignorant hamlet is powerless to bring back the little life. The mother may offer him her jewels—her heavy nose-ring, the envy of her girl-children, her plaited bangles, her toe-studs brought years ago from Delhi—but all the parohit's arrogant invocations have not the power of the whispered prayer of the humble Tishbite. So the body is being carried away to be burned.

Yonder too passing through the corn-fields, still green

with their young crops, is a party worthy of notice. A woman brightly clothed is riding on a small white horse burthened with a ponderous head and a pink nose, and still more ponderous saddle: before her is set a little boy, perhaps three years old, and his cap is of gilded tinsel, his dress of gauzy muslins with brilliant edges. They have stained the horse's tail and legs a brilliant salmon colour. Behind the horse stride the husband and his brother; their step is brisker than when they are bound for the ploughs, their clothes more brilliantly white: on their feet are red shoes turned up at the toes with green. In their left hands they hold tight a little bundle, their right hands grasp six-foot bamboos. The party is on its way to marry the little boy to a still smaller girl. The baby-bridegroom evidently likes it: he claps his hand to the curly-tailed puppy that barks beneath the horse's nose, and waves his arms to the passing train: and the parents like it, for by the expedition they add one more to the long list of their holidays, and one more family to the long list of their relations, that mysterious "bhai bund," or brotherhood, which the native of India delights in increasing. The match is a good one in every way, say the neighbours—most desirable. What if the pair only number five springs between them? Will they not both grow?

The next village will hardly have a wedding in it for many a long year to come. The railway has destroyed it. Once it was a thriving village. But the railway came

and then the rains; but there was something wrong—perhaps the embankments checked the drainage—for the water which used to flow down to the valley remained upon the fields. To throw corn-seed upon water seemed to the villagers waste of grain, so the land produced no crop that year. But the next year it did—a crop of deaths. The Government sent down its chiefs of sanitation, and they sat in judgment upon it; but the plague meanwhile was reaping with keen sickle, and the remnant of the living fled from the village of the dead. It now belongs by right of sole possession to the adjutant birds, who stand, economizing one leg, upon its grassy walls, or parade with a severe solemnity up and down its courtyards. The adjutants are always of a grave mien—even when, as I saw them near Etawah, they are assembled for the discussion of so cheerful a topic as a dead horse. The lure had drawn together for the day a diligent convention of greedy birds, the staid adjutants, the sordid vultures, and the communist crows. In the midst of the strange company lies the carcase, and as you pass you catch a gleam as of a clean picked rib, and an ugly confusion of animal noises, now and then a great wing is flapped, and yet, except for a thick croak, or a sudden riot of feathers, the birds are silent enough over their meal. In the outer ring, waiting sulkily till the adjutants shall have eaten their fill, sit the vultures, their ragged pinions drooped to the ground, their bald heads erect to watch every movement of the revellers—unable to

approach the carcase, and yet unwilling to give up hopes. Around the company, and in and out, hop the bright-eyed crows, ever and again making a plunge for a morsel, alert to seize an opportunity to annoy the less active, or to snatch up the shreds of carrion which may be jerked out of the circle ; now perched on a vulture's back to command a better view, now darting between the adjutants' legs, now rolling on the ground in sullen contest with some more lucky bird.

And then Etawah—and breakfast—and next Aligurh and its ill-favoured country, but abounding in antelope, which scarcely trouble themselves to turn to look at the passing train ; and then Toondla—may Toondla be forgiven for its draught-beer!—and so through the falling evening on to Ghaziabad. Two hours to stay is little hardship, for luggage has to be juggled from one side to the other, dinner has to be eaten and a long pipe to be smoked, and then into the carriage again, and away through the moonlight to “merry” Meerut. But not merry just now, for the beautiful station is fast asleep ; but even the stranger, rattled along in the gharrie of the country, can appreciate its smoothly metalled roads, spacious and edged with trees ; the roomy compounds, and the wide maidans behind which looms a great battalion of barracks.

In the dâk-gharries leaving Meerut. A night glorious with a full moon and cool air ; a bed comfortable with cosy rugs, a tobacco-pouch and flask ; the tattoos striving

their vile worst to avoid the labour for which they were foaled and bred, and to compass the destruction of their fare. And who can ever forget those suddenly recurring periods of full stop and noise whenever there was a change of horses? Two ponies are seen creeping with a mournful demeanour up the road-bank; are seized, when they arrive upon the level, by a savagely-costumed youth, who has hitherto confined* his attentions to a melancholy post-horn; are thrust backwards with much irrelevant abuse of the animals' relatives into the primitive harness; and then, as soon as all the rope-ends and buckles are adjusted and—the youth having resumed his abominable music—the traveller has made up his mind that he is really off at last, the tattoos turn solemnly round, and look with a sad and pensive expression of face into the gharrie-door. The whole establishment is at once provoked into a deadly enmity towards those sad-faced ponies, and falls to whacking with long sticks on their responsive ribs. At last, while one man, scantily clad and yelling hoarsely, pulls by a thin rope each tattoo's ewe-neck to the extremity of its tension, and two others push savagely at each wheel—the unhappy animals are deluded into moving a leg. Once set a-going, they are lost animals; shouts grow more frantic, necks are pulled an inch longer, the wheel describes the first segment of a circle; matter yields to mind, and in a wild burst of despair the gharrie on a sudden wakes up, and is carried

headlong onwards. And so on to Gurmukhtesur : intervals of mad speed, post-horn, and jolting ; intervals of stagnation, sleepy syces and coolies, stubborn relays, and persuasive whacks.

The tattoo has been Hinduized by generations of monotonous ignorance into a sullen obstructiveness. He has no objection to carry, as did his fathers before him, great loads of merchandise, field produce, or fat traders, from morning to night and day after day. But he must do it at his own pace, a pensive walk. He resents our headlong civilization, as he calls it, "our galloping legislation." He is, he says, being civilized too fast ; he is not a hansom horse yet, but his descendants will develop in time, when his sons through many generations shall have intermarried with the stately daughters of Feringhee studs, the high-bred dames of Oosur, Ghazipore, Buxar, and Koruntadee ; when the even kunkur shall have replaced the weary mud and dust, and the sons of men have learnt the secret of keeping roads in repair. "Wait," cries the tattoo ; "we are a great nation that has been slumbering for centuries, contented with the memories of our primeval Arabian splendour. Let us wake up by degrees. We are being educated, and in time will be all you wish ; at present we are only tats." But our century has no patience ; and so we insist, with our mail-carts, horns, and long-thonged whips, in riding behind small tattoos at hansom speed. One result, however, is that we are soon at Gurmukhtesur—the dawn-breaking.

On the sands at Gurmukhtesur. This is a *fête* day, and as our doolies wind their way among the stiff tussocks of keen harsh grass which the sand barely supports, the long processions of holiday-makers—men with their foreheads daubed with yellow ochre and vermilion, and women, with their hair worked up into a high turret, their left cheeks half covered by the extravagant nose-jewel, their strangely coloured clothes, a head sheet of crimson-red, a kirtle of orange, and a bodice of many-coloured chintz—was a sight that should be vouchsafed only to artists. Beggars are plentiful, thrusting crippled limbs before us, arrogant in proportion to their deformities; half-tamed cattle with portentous horns block up the narrow foot-paths and resent interference; salesmen abound with a variety of valueless wares. Here a man is offering to the pious crowd sweetmeats of strange shapes, and all strangely dirty; there another is sitting beside a poor dozen of clay figures; a third a little way off sells coarse green flasks, in which the worshippers carry home with them the water of the holy river. Among the women I saw two of a strange beauty. They were walking together, each holding on her head a curious flat earthen flask, with a raised mouth in the centre of the disc. Their dress was as brilliant as bright colours audaciously alternated could make them—orange with scarlet, yellow with red, and each with all. They were above the average height of women, strong-limbed, but shapely, and holding themselves as only Eastern damsels do. Their colour was a

fine maize ; their mouths full-lipped, but not weak in expression ; nose and eyebrows perfect ; and their eyes—they were not eyes, but positive *glories*. My doolie happened to be stopped a few seconds close before them, but in that time there was leisure enough to guess at, in those great eyes, a strange depth of the wild Rohilla character. I think that one must have been named Jael, the other Judith.

Then we reach the river, and a ponderous boat is waiting for us, and on to this our doolies are lifted. Behind us crowd in a score of men who, their piety assuaged, are returning to their fields and every-day work. We are punted out, and farther and farther recedes the white sand of the river-side, fringed with the brilliant colours of the holiday dresses, and fainter and more faint come to us the cries of invocation to the God of the River. Then the unwieldy boat gets aground, and the boatmen lay down their oars—miracles of false balance and bad workmanship—and slip into the river, and with much shouting pull the crazy structure into deeper water. We move along again, on either hand a long reach of sand, until we reach a point where a dunghill has been heaped up on a slope as a jetty for the convenience of man and beast. Pride is out of the question, so I use the dunghill as a pier, and at the upper end find myself once more on the sands, a prey to doolie-men, who carry me off across an uninteresting plain, into a wilderness of stunted palm-trees. Here and there stands one of

a normal stature, but the greed of their owners for the potent juice has dwarfed all the rest, and the earthen pots hanging in a circle under the coronal of fronds tell their own tale. Through these we pass, and suddenly emerge upon the welcome stage where gharries are again waiting for us. And as we rattle and jingle along, how very much alike one mile is to another ! The occasional corn patches with the *machans* like eagles' nests standing out from the middle ; the circles of travellers smoking under the trees by the road-side ; long streaks of reedy marsh in which grey and white wading-birds are looking for worms, and over which hover and dart innumerable dragon-flies. Here, too, is the same goat we left behind us at Allahabad—standing ridiculously on its hind-legs against a tree, trying in vain to reach down with its fore-feet a tuft of leaves which you know that, at its utmost stretch, it can never reach. But the goat, though ambitious, has little perseverance, so he soon gives up his attempt, and falls to at the humbler vegetables, which, growing on the flat ground, yield themselves an easy prey. Hour slips after hour ; we are weary of pipes, and the afternoon glare reveals us to ourselves in all the grime of travel. Welcome is the long reach of shady road that leads into Moradabad, and thrice welcome the ascent to the dāk-bungalow. With soap and water returns my self-respect, and with the proud air of one born to command I order the instant death of pullets.

Who writes the *facetiae* in dāk-bungalow books? Go

where you will upwards you meet him : at Moradabad, which I take to be a typical dâk-bungalow, with khan-samah constructed as per standard plan, and bath-room doors that never shut ; at Durrial, that lonesome house where good curry abideth ; at Kaladoongee, prettily built and cheerful, where the secret of tea is known to the cook ; at NyneeTal, with its abundance of provisions from a "sudden death" to a Strasbourg paté, from the local brew to Giesler's driest ; at Ramghur, where fowls lay the eggs of finches, but develop the bones of vultures ; at Pooree, where the dâk-bungalow dog, a fastidious beast, chooses to hunt and disperse his fleas under strangers' beds ; at Almorah, the model of dâk-bungalows, where visits you the wily vendor of Ghoorka curios, the strange man who offers you in a breath yak-tails, honey, or stuffed birds, an executioner's sword as in fashion in Nepal, or walnuts seven hundred for the rupee ; at Raneekhet, where wood—so stringent are our forest laws—cannot be bought but can be stolen without any difficulty—where no fowls can be obtained, but eggs are cheap ; at Khyrna, where once a year fever kills off the staff, leaving only a washer-man to cook for travellers, and a grass-cutter to wait upon them at dinner ;—at one or all of these places, we have only to look at the dâk-bungalow book to track the facetious wanderer from stage to stage. The trail of the unny man is over them all.

But I left myself just starting from Moradabad, passing through the picturesque bazaar, paying toll at the

bridge of boats, and then entering a long reach of grey sand. Here it is impossible not to wonder at and admire the splendid working of the doolie-bearers. Though the heavy sand lies ankle-deep, their courtesy to each other is unbroken, their cheerfulness unchanging—now passing a joke with a friend going by, now exchanging a hearty “Ram Ram” with another party of bearers—ever alert to take up the pole in their proper series, watchful of sudden holes, and keeping up as they trot a running commentary on the road, their freight, their hookahs, or the passers-by. The coolie, however, seems to many a poor thing. At any rate, it takes a terribly short time for some who come to India to consider him a creature of no feelings, and of less reason. Sensitive as the young Englishman, with his grand nation’s ideas of independence, may be when he first reaches Calcutta or Bombay, the sharp edges of his humanity are worn off before he reaches his station, and in a month he finds himself speaking of “coolies”—ay, and he regrets it at times—as the beasts of burden of the country, which for a paltry three pennies he may use for twelve hours of God’s daylight for any purpose he pleases. His humanity is his misfortune, and his poor allotment of reason the handle for his degradation. Better for him had his arms remained feet, his ears never been replicated. And yet the coolie is worthy of admiration. His heroism in toil should commend itself to Englishmen; while the fine independence

of the 600 men who not long ago struck work on a Government canal, and went home without three weeks' wages due to them, is an index of no mean natures. Their reason was that one poor creature of their number had been treated with injustice. Tell the howling working-man of free and independent England this, and he will say "damned fools." The injured man should have gone to law in a regular way, his expenses being paid by his comrades: a petition against the ill-usage of coolies should have gone up to government, and meanwhile there should have been a strike for only eight hours' work, and a rise of twenty-four per cent. in the wages. But the up-country coolies argued differently. A brother had been insulted: were they in turn to lose their "honour"? Rather than this, they hungrily forewent their wages, and returned unpaid to their homes among the rhododendrons on the hills.

And now the night is falling, the torches have been lighted, and before us lies the Terai, with its miasmata and tigers. This is the fabled tract over which, as the English public once believed, no bird can fly, but drops halfway into the poison-breathing jungle; no beast can live except the hyæna, with whom fever agrees; the cayman which knows not ague, flying-foxes, and a hideous multitude of vipers—the anaconda, pythons, and amphisbœnas, gross spiders that overpower birds, and the snapping turtle. How different it is to us now! A doolie, to which sleep comes as lightly as to feather-beds, six men

and a torch, an hour or two of a not uncomfortable motion, and we find ourselves with the day beginning to break beyond "the deadly Terai." And then another hour, and we turn full upon the dāk-bungalow at Kala dungī—the jungle fowl calling from the deep coverts, the first sun striking through the columned trees, a ragged tapestry of moss hanging from every bough, and the clean-clad kitmutgar bowing in gratitude for favours to come.



Up the hill. First the pleasant level, thick-shaded, along which the pony lends itself willingly to spur and whip until the stranger thinks the hills have been maligned, exaggerated ; that khuds are the unwholesome fictions of some dyspeptic spinster ; that he will canter into Nynee Tal in time for a late breakfast. Only sixteen miles—but on a sudden Dya Patta becomes a stern reality ; and the pony, an old mountaineer, refuses even an amble ; the road looks as if it never could go down hill again ; the sun finds you out on the path, and stares at you as you creep up ; and before Mangowlie is reached, your watch has told you that breakfast—let it be never so late—must be cold by this time. The khansamah there tells you that Nynee Tal is still seven miles above you ; and if it rains !—but I will not suppose it. Rather let the ride up be in that glorious month October. The clear air reveals on one side "the Plains" spread out, a white river winding along, dark patches of forest-land enamelled upon lighter ones of corn-fields and bare plains, stately clouds here

and there leisurely trailing their dark shadows across the landscape ; on the others, east, west, and north,—The Hills ! They are heaped together, wall behind wall of living green, with great ramparts of rock and smooth grassy bastions disposed in orderly disorder, and for moats long valleys filled with white mist—a grand system of fortifications guarding the approaches to the snows. The path mounts upwards ; on either hand lies a great slope of pine and oak, boulders panelled and festooned with moss and ferns, the green landscape relieved here by a mass of yellow mullen, there by the crimson leaves of the creepers fading among the pines.

On the sunny patches, or where a gorge suddenly opening shows a great triangle of mountain side sloping down to a valley in which the trees look like shrubs and from which rises up the pleasant sound of rushing water, flit insects of shapes and tints strange to the new-comer. Great velvet bees, banded with orange and gold ; the flame-coloured *Sirex* and a myriad of butterflies—*Sarpedon* on his wings reflecting in broad bars the blue of the sky above ; *Polyctor* gorgeous in purple and green and gold ; *Paris* with, on either wing, a great splash of sapphire ; the *Gonepteryx* and *Colias* wandering sun-flashes and the fritillaries, on whose under-wings lie silver sparkles caught, in flitting over, from some glittering cascade. But what a dearth of animal life ! There are no squirrels on the boughs, or hares on the hill-side. Where are the deer lying ? where the monkeys hidden ? Even birds are few.

The slate-blue jay is heard screeching or seen hopping among the fallen leaves; the braggart parrot with his yellow tail that can never leave a tree without telling the world of it, a woodpecker or nuthatch is heard at times, or a wagtail is seen. True, there is that ubiquitous philosopher the crow, his vile voice viler by the sore throat he seems to have caught in the hills, and there are tomtits everywhere; but the wilderness of trees seems somehow very desolate. Oh! for the more beautiful forests of England, the forest of Savernake. There the giant beech-trees, smooth-lobed and tender foliaged, spread wide their level arms to shade the herds of dappled deer, and the red squirrels chatter from the silver boughs of the dainty larches; in the tall bracken-fern lie couched a nation of hares and rabbits; on the white thorn, still redolent with the perfume of opening leaf buds, swing the blackbird and the thrush, fluting from morning to night; a thousand song-birds are in every thicket, and comfortable dormice nestle in every knoll of moss. Glorious indeed are the mountains and the forests of the East; but it seems as if there came to them after the Creator, grandly shaping as He passed, no angels with loving lady hands to make each corner beautiful, to cover each stone with mosses, plant flowers in each cranny and chink, and give to every nook its tuneful bird or harmless beast.

But no one can accuse me of indifference to the beauties of the Indian Hills. Come with me to Nynce

Tal and along the level road that scars old-Cheena, from which the green lake is seen lying, pear-shaped, at the feet of the watchful hills, on which, perched one above the other, glisten the white-walled homes that we, in our Northern love of cold, have travelled so far to build. Here is the Snow Seat. Blessed benches! Buddha himself, had he just toiled up the steep Khyrna gorge, could not have refrained with all his self-denial from resting on your broad-barred levels: your height with a nice discretion so adjusted, that the feet, sick of going now on heel and now on toe, can rest plantigrade, fully, comfortably flat, upon the ground, the elbows leaning upon the knees, and between the open palms the head—while the eyes, resentful of the everlasting up-rights of the hills, the eternity of rock and tree, rest leisurely upon the distant sublimity of the Snowy Range. The Snowy Range! Hats off to the Trisool. Bow to Khamet. Down, down with you, to their queen, the Nunda Devi. Modest in her superb pre-eminence, she stands blushing—for the sun is rising—behind her more forward and less lovely sisters, the grand trinity of rock that from year to year looks full across through cloud and storm. The elements may fume and fret at times; the space between the Snow Hills and the Snow Seat be filled now with dense sleet, now with denser fogs; black rain-clouds may sulk along the mountains' side, summer fleeces float about them or cluster round their brows. But the rain-cloud is soon emptied, the fog slinks

away, and the summer fleeces are melted into the ardent blue; and still there, in their places, are the great calm hills, sphinx-eyed, enthroned upon the Himalayas, and robed in imperial ermine. No wonder that the natives hold the snows in awe! Fair or foul the weather, from age to age, the grand Three sit there, a bench of gods keeping count of time. The desolation of the snows is terrible. Seldom does a bird visit them: few beasts dwell among them. Their very grandeur forbids familiarity even with Nature.

When I first saw the snows, it was unexpectedly; I gasped out with my last mouthful of breath (for I had just walked up the hill) "*the snows!*" Then I sat down comfortably and lighted my pipe, and, resting my head upon my hands, I looked. And while I looked I forgot to smoke: the silent solemnity of those great hills crept over me, and before I had satisfied my eyes, I got up, the act was hardly voluntary, and passed down the hill, as if, my sacrifice offered, it would have been irreverent to loiter.



Driving along on any hot morning to an uninteresting routine of office work, you feel a flabby sort of sympathy with the man out in the sun, struggling with refractory bullocks at the well—and are half resolved to see about having a shed put up for him. But something goes wrong with you, and you fall at once into the poetical error of envying "humble but honest" toil—would it not be better after all to have nothing worse to harry you

than that lucky fellow there out by the well coaxing bullocks up the well-walk, and sauntering with them down again? But after awhile, again, there comes a holiday, and as you rattle past the very same man for a week with a friend "in camp," you pity "that poor beggar" who, despite all his hallooing, can only send his beasts up-hill by twisting their tails, and down-hill by kicking their stomachs. And some day you will be transferred to another station, perhaps get that last step that levels all promotion; but a man will go on drawing water from the same well, and the wheels will creak, and the bullocks stagger, for your successor to moralize over just as they did for you. This is very feeble moralizing—you cannot moralize *currente calamo*, for twaddle is only to be avoided with labour—but it was my first impression when starting on my sight-seeing, so I record it.

On my way to the railway station the chuprassy who brings round the begging-book for our band-stand met me, and in the lofty plenitude of my benignity I pulled up to explain to him that as we were going to the hills he need not bring it next month. On other occasions I have spoken roughly to that man.

Friends had been very careful to warn us against railway travelling in May. But I am superstitious, and believe in luck, if confidently wooed. Besides, the auguries had been most auspicious. I saw nine vultures on one palm-tree in the railway-barracks compound, and

there were three kites on the corner of the station roof. So I took our tickets boldly.

Benares has often been visited but never described. I should like to have a year's leave given me to wander about it ; but I am not sure that I should venture at the end of the twelve months to attempt a description. I believe I should have turned Hindoo before my leave was up, for as it is, the sacred glamour of the place makes me think reverently of the holy city. But besides the actual city itself—"Kashi" the house of the gods—there is much that has never been described at all. Where, for instance, is the story of Madho Das's garden to be found—a story that includes every event of interest since we took the Province? Then there is the College, as instinct with interest as the Golden Temple itself, with its beautiful grounds, that owe so much of their beauty to the care of the scholar known so well to Europe by his graceful translation of the Ramayana. Walk in the garden in the early morning, and the singular aptitude of the Benares College for the Oxfordship of oriental learning grows upon you with an accumulative force that only the power of the beauty of the Taj can equal, and nothing can surpass. More wild things, birds and animals, live unmolested in the college garden than in all the rest of Benares. Leave the pigeon-flights out of calculation. Sit only under the bamboos, or wander among the rose wildernesses round—a graceless economy has degraded into a school-room the house

that used to belong to the senior professor—and you will understand my meaning. The whole place is instinct with creature life. Under the trees close by, stand scattered and grouped ancient carvings from Saranath and elsewhere, objects of study for men of science, of worship for the country side. Over and among these squirrels troop merrily, and families of sedate mynas take their pleasure. Up in the bamboos above you is a family of tree-cats, and grey squirrels innumerable; and among their roots the diligent mongoos is busy all day long. Lizards and frogs of portentous growth divide the damper spots between them, while the sunny level of the lawn is the playground of all the prettiest winged things known to our Indian gardens. Never disturbed here, they have grown bold by long security, and the golden orioles and blue jays, crow-pheasants and bee-eaters have come to look upon the grounds of the College as sacred to themselves. A jealous wall encloses them from the hurry and dust of the outer business world, and the highways of traffic are hidden from sight by creepers and dainty foliage, among which a nation of little birds, queer little green ones that wear white spectacles, and dainty purple creatures like humming birds, besides a multitude of beautiful insects. In the midst of these wild things' pleasure-grounds, Mr. Ralph Griffith's house, buried in trees and creepers, shows as an ideal retreat of culture and tasteful scholarship. But we have no time to loiter over the grounds.

Take a look, however, as you pass it, at the crocodile in the tank. The beast was put in here nineteen years ago, and is now only about six feet long. He (or it) lives at the bottom of a tank, and requires much prodding with bamboos before he will put his head out of the dirty water, and when he does there is much in his personal appearance to justify his shyness.

A "sight" to be seen near Benares, and one that has been described out of all likeness to itself, is the old Buddhist tope of Saranath. But there is little room for enthusiasm. To enjoy it, you must enjoy the drive to and fro, so the day must be such a one as that which we chanced upon. The sun had taken "privilege leave," and a brisk cool breeze was officiating for him, and the drive was as delightful as it could be. And all the world was out of doors at noon. By the road sides the vendors of queerly-bottled concoctions sat comfortably, and under a tree with small round purple blossoms, the wee brown children were sweeping up the fallen flowers into heaps and tumbling in them, glad to find any plaything. The rain of the day before had washed the country clean, the cactus banks were all aglitter with yellow stars, and on the cool and dust-laid ground the easily contented kine lay at rest. Along the roads women filed chattering, and, relieved from the burden of the summer sun, seemed to bear lightly their prodigious loads of cucumbers and mangoes. What splendid mangoes those are in the orchards on the way to Saranath! I

was told they belonged to Rajah Shambu Narain. He is the son of that fine old gentleman Sir Deo Narain Singh, who behaved so well in '57, in spite of the fact that he himself believed that our raj was, at any rate for a time, over and gone. That he actually did hold this belief all the time he worked so splendidly for us rests on his own word, and it illustrates the high estimation in which his character was held by the Englishmen who knew him, that though none of them ever doubted the truth of his conviction, none ever doubted his courageous loyalty.

Saranath is one of those places that you "ought to see, you know," but which you can have seen just as well from a photograph as from life. When you have said, on first viewing it, "what a tremendous heap of bricks," on examining it, "what boldness of design in that flamboyant tracery," and on going into the tunnel which runs through it, "I hope there are no snakes here," you have nearly exhausted remark. The wretched old impostor who lights wisps of straw to see you into the tunnel, —and mumbles what he supposes to be Sanscrit when he has got you into the middle,—has got doubled up by creeping through the tunnel, and wealthy at the same time. At any rate he scorns pice. His descendants, moreover, who dance wildly round the carriage for "bakshish" as you go, are—in spite of their impudent statement that they "kabhi khana nahin khaya" ("have *never* had any victuals")—as fat and jolly little

imps as any in fairyland, and the extraordinary way in which they keep up with the carriage, threading their way through the strewn boulders and bricks, illustrates the perfecting effects of long practice and the excellence of their *physique*.

Close by Saranath is a large artificial mound, on the top of which is perched a curious pepper-box construction apparently of great antiquity, as the bricks that have fallen from it are thickly strewn over the sides of the mound. As we were driving by, a pariah puppy was alarmed from its *siesta* by our sudden approach and fled up the mound. Running over the bricks was difficult work, so, instinctively reverting to the habits of its wild-dog ancestry, it suddenly squatted down and as suddenly seemed to have disappeared! Whether by accident or from inherited instinct, it had selected a spot that exactly matched in tints its own colouring. More than this, it crouched down with its head so neatly fitted between two brick fragments, the body flattened miraculously along the ground, and the thigh-bones protruding so angularly, as to defy the sharpest eyes. I stopped the carriage, and neither my wife nor the coachman could see it, though the dog was only twenty yards off and the largest cover bits of brick—and in the olden days of Buddhism bricks were only an inch thick.

This reminds me of an adventure that befell me in my first jungle experience. I had gone to a friend's camp

in the Kirwi district, and one morning strolled up a hill side after a peacock, which had settled among some great boulders at the top. Arrived there, I was clambering with great caution from stone to stone, looking round on every side for the bird, when I came to a boulder too far from the next to step quietly over, and with my head turned to one side had got one leg over the boulder, feeling with my foot for the ground. Not being able to reach it, I looked over to see how deep the drop was, and saw that my foot was only about an inch from the ground. *The ground!* It was a leopard! And the next instant he was out like a flash and down the hill side. One of my friends' coolies who had come up at the moment declares the beast ran over him. At any rate the coolie was lying on the ground, but I fancy "astonishment" had a good deal to do with his attitude.

However, this is not Benares. The day was so thoroughly cool that instead of going home, we drove to the city to enjoy the sunset from the minarets. A short way from it we halted, while a servant went to hire a tonjon, and a crowd at once collected to stare at us. Such a collection! Spectral faquires, all yellow ochre and rosary, stalwart men carrying an empty lotah and a yard of string, weak old women staggering under great baskets laden with melons and strange things of the cucumber kind, boys in all stages of spleen and not enough cloth for one shirt among them all—they all stopped to look at us. And while we were waiting we

bought some of those copper cylinders in which the poorer people wear their charms, horoscopes, or any talismanic paper they possess, and some of the little flasks in which the economically pious carry oil to the shrines. They would hold about a salt-spoonful each, but the mouth requires a cork half an inch long—the most pleasing combination of economy and ostentation I have met with even among the very economical worshippers of Benares. I can fancy Bisheshwar's priests must often have cause for lamentation, for flowers and water, though they may testify devotion, do not fill priestly stomachs.

It is a wonderful walk that, through the Benares byeways. Sanctity, it is well known, is odorous, but here, so solid is the holiness held in solution in the air, that it precipitates plentifully on the ground, and you walk over a thick and ill-savoured paste of Ganges water and votive flowers. Arriving at Aurungzebe's great mosque, we climbed one of the minarets. Surely one of the most wonderful sights in the whole world is the view from the top. On three sides lies the great city, a wilderness of flat-roofed houses of many storeys, and for every two houses there is a temple. The prospect absolutely bristles with temple tops, and of all colours, most of them maroon, some white, but others tipped with scarlet and gold, one all gilt, and one sky blue. Thickly scattered among the buildings are peepul trees, of an exquisite green, and between tree and temple, flocks of parrots and

pigeons are all day long in restless motion ; and all day long, from the sacred courts, goes up to Brahm a perpetual incense of ringing bells and reverend invocation. I do not think we are likely in our travels to enjoy such a sight again.

From the great mosque we went to the Brass Bazaar, and here the heathen spoiled us. Besides the ordinary Benares brass work—which, by the way, is now so fashionable in England that the Benares trade has increased since the Prince of Wales' visit, to six times its former dimensions ; for one worker in brass in 1870, there are, so our courteous guide, the Rao Sahib, told me, ten now—there are wondrous odds and ends to be picked up. Among many others we got, for instance, a curious swinging tray suspended by a snake-chain from an octagonal arch, ornamented at each point with a monster's head, like the gurgoyles on a minster wall, and a peacock with its tail spread : a bell with, on the top of the handle, a curious figure, in the attitude of prayer, a combination of a winged Ninevite creature, and one of Flaxman's harpies, intended no doubt for the Vulture King Garuda, the hair curled in regular layers of ringlets down to its waist, and great wings springing from the shoulder, and coming down below the feet. The feet are human, but behind is a bird's tail, spread fan-wise. Other treasures were a brass cobra (Nepalese work), particularly well moulded, and the attitude instinct with malignant life ; a vase about four inches high, with a double handle, and removable

top, the handles being two female figures, whose feet lose themselves in a plait, which again fines down into the pattern of the body of the vase in a most artistic way. The ornamentation of this small object is particularly good; leaves, flowers, and arabesque, forming a setting on either side for a medallion on which, in bas-relief, is represented a dragon fighting with two men—the design throughout being singularly artistic and the workmanship very good. I need not mention others now, but it is worth noticing that the shop-owners do not put these curiosities prominently forward. They are to be hunted for on the remotest corners of the back shelves. In front is always placed the glittering and rather frivolous ware that now finds such a ready sale in London as “Indian art,” but the real treasures have to be extorted only by searching. And from the haphazard in which their prices are named it is evident that the idea of selling these things to a European had never been entertained. For instance, rummaging in one shop, I chanced upon a tiny *attar-dan* most quaintly carved, with four peacocks at the corners, and a larger bird in the middle. The owner asked two rupees for it, but accepted, laughingly, eight annas. This curiosity-hunting proved so fascinating, that we spent the rest of the day in the brass bazaar and its precincts, accumulating in our rummaging a quantity of delightful impossibilities.

Next morning we saw Benares “from the river”—that wonderful sight of a city at its bath and prayers. What a happy lazy life it seems that of the river-side priests ; and

how lightly, their devotions once over, the sacredness of the place sits on the people ! Two pariah dogs, chasing a bandicoot along a ghât crowded with the undressed pious, converted the whole congregation into merry-makers ; and while one woman was mumbling her prayers over a palmful of water, another came up quietly from behind, and "ducked" her. What the native has to do he does, let the time or place be, to our notions, never so unsuitable. Going down the river, therefore, you must be prepared to see that simple child of Nature, the mild Hindoo, going through in public with his preparations for the day, with a thoroughness and unbashfulness that might otherwise surprise you.

On leaving the boat, we went of course to the Golden Temple—a spot of such surpassing sanctity that it is impossible, with any knowledge of its traditions, to enter it without "emotions." From there to the Gyanbapi well. This is an interesting historical spot, as having given rise in 1809, to a riot that, but for the sagacity of Mr. Bird, then officiating as "active magistrate," would almost certainly have culminated in a total massacre of the Mahommedans of Benares.¹ The Mahommedans wantonly outraged the temple, whereupon the Hindoos

¹ This story, curiously enough, is probably known in its authentic entirety only to myself, for when editing the Benares Records for the Government of the N. W. P., I chanced upon it. The present Lieut.-Governor of the province, however, cannot afford to print the second volume of my Records, his expenditure on Government House being somewhat heavy.

retaliated by defiling the mosques which stand actually within the same walls as the temple. The Mahomedans upon this wrecked the Hindoo premises, overthrew the great "*lâth* of Bhairo," and defiled the fragments. This *lâth* was, perhaps, *the* most sacred object in Benares, and the frenzy of the Hindoos may therefore be imagined. All night long the city was as busy as at noon, for in every bazaar or alley the oath was being administered by the *goshains* to their co-religionists to take revenge. Early next day, therefore, the Rajputs turned out, wrecked the mosque, and killed every Mahomedan found in the place—beginning with the weavers. The Mahomedans, meanwhile, had entertained the insane idea of outraging the Besheshwar temple. Had this supreme sacrilege been committed, not a Mahomedan would have been alive in Benares the next day. As it was, the two armies (for there were thousands of armed men on either side) met, and after a sharp conflict—a hundred and eighty men were afterwards found on the spot dead—the Mahomedans fled. The Rajputs then carried fire and sword into the city, and before our regular troops could fairly occupy it, so much had been done, that some fifty mosques were in flames, and a hundred and odd more dead bodies were collected from the streets. Order was, however, restored at last, and at this day the Mahomedans and Hindoos mix in worship as peacefully as ever. The existence, however, of the two religions in such close proximity is a standing menace to the peace of the city;

for one mischievous man of either creed could, by a single act, fill the sacred precincts with slaughter, and in the narrow alleys of Benares our troops would take a considerable time in doing any service.

We loitered about these temples—supposed by millions of our fellow-subjects to be the actual abode in the flesh of the gods whom they worship—as long as we thought we could without offending the priests by seeming idly curious, and then wandered off to the Monkey Temple. The creatures there are so over-fed that they played with the grain that we gave them, threw it about, sat on it, made faces at it—but would not eat it. There is one gigantic fellow, known to the temple people as “the lord of all,” who behaved as a very autocrat, for he sat at the narrow entrance to the temple courtyard, and pulled every goat’s leg that passed, cuffed the dogs, and when he saw another monkey going to eat, knocked the food from its hand. And when he lay down, the nearest monkey obsequiously proceeded to scratch his stomach. I think, if I were a monkey, I would rather be that one than the freest of free simians in any Brazilian forest—and yet it is difficult to imagine happiness more complete than that of a Brazilian monkey in a primeval forest.

From the monkey temple we went back to the bazaars, and wandered about till sundown; becoming possessed in our rambles of another load of uselessness. Among the assortment was another collection of devotional oil-bottles, differing from the others in being

even more cheaply devout. Imagine a bottle about the size of a cherry, having at the bottom a pimple as large as three cherry-stones. The containing capacity of that bottle must therefore be something less than the space between the skin and the stone of a cherry ! Of course we bought a collection of gods—Hanuman wielding his ferocious mace, and Bhairo with his baton of office. Bhairo is the superintendent of the divine police of the city, Bisheshwar himself being too busy with other things to attend to police matters, and Bhairo, being in his turn also too busy, relegates his duties to his baton, and so this intelligent cudgel goes the rounds of Benares by itself and inflicts summary justice upon all breakers of the law. We found, too, Krishna fluting on an invisible flute to invisible milk-maids ; Bala crawling on all fours ; Lakshmi on her lotus ; Ganesh, the paunchy god of the wily shop-keeping banniah, with the head of the sagacious elephant, and his feet resting on a rat, emblem of cheese-paring thrift and small cunning.

We left Benares at last, and very sorry we were to go ; for there is a world of marvels in its labyrinth of lanes.



A crime peculiar to this season of the year was rampant all along the line of the Oudh and Rohilcund railway—the selling of bad melons. We ourselves, tempted by the appearance of the fruit, bought about a dozen, both musk and water-melons. But not one was fit to eat. They smelt divinely, but were all either over-

ripe or green. And yet the native passengers ate them readily, for they were only about a penny a-piece. No wonder these unfortunates die in the way they do at the least hint of sickness.

I know of nothing in human history more pathetic than this readiness of the natives of India to succumb to disease. Sudden death seems to be accepted by them as a natural development of an illness; as a regular stage, and the final one, of an ailment. They inherit sudden death. In the West, if a man dies unexpectedly and, apparently, from insufficient cause, we inquire if there was anything against the deceased—an irregular habit of life, or a tendency to drink, or persistent carelessness of his health. In India death for inadequate reasons carries no problem with it. It never occurs to any one to wonder why he died, for everybody knows already that it was because he never had enough to eat, and because his ancestors before him, through many generations, lived and died half-starved. This is what kills off the natives of India in such piteous numbers and with such piteous ease. They die simply because they are not fit to live. At the best of times and as a regular thing, many thousands of Indian peasants wear their waist-bands tightened to the utmost, so as to relieve the pains of hunger, and between them and actual famine there intervenes only the daily handful of parched grain. When ordinary sickness, therefore, finds out such as these, the poor half-starved creatures go down before

the scythe in swathes, and when famine—such as I saw it in Madras in 1877—unmitigated and relentless famine overtakes them they die by villages, and districts are desolated.

We, in the West, can hardly understand, therefore, what it means that “rain has fallen in India,” and it may seem at first sight—so wide is the world and so far apart the interests of races—a strange thing that a fall of rain should be magnified by such language as is often used. And yet in a year of threatened famine it is not easy to find in history a greater blessing than the sudden relief of a shower. Those who best know the land so sorely athirst; who remember the dreary, leafless months, when, scathed by hot winds, the country-side lies bare and brown under a sky of relentless blue, and who have had experience, too, of that first day of gathering clouds, when the whole face of nature betokens a welcome to the coming rain; when, almost in a single night, the heat-cracked plains clothe themselves with grass, the fainting trees are lit up with the brightness of young leaves, and the world awakens on the morrow to a surprise of fertility—these can best picture to themselves the true spectacle of the change that transfigures the face of India, when the clouds burst upon the empty fields. During the months of July, August, September, and October, which, in other and more kindly seasons, are rich with springing vegetation and glad with ‘the grace of standing corn,’ India lay in 1877 wasting under

a remorseless sun, a great length of deadly days, while the ploughs stood idle under the old peepul-tree in the centre of the village, and the men gathered gloomily about the headman's house, and sadly along the dusty highways went the tinkling feet of the women sent forth to the shrine by the river to supplicate the Goddess of Rain. Day by day the peasant doled out for the present meal the precious store put by for sowing his fields for the next year's harvest; day by day the women going to the well found their ropes yet another inch too short for the bucket to dip in the shrinking water. The cattle, long ago turned loose to find their food where they could, had given up the vain search in the fields, and lingered about the village, snuffing at the empty troughs and lowing impatiently for the evening meal of bitter leaves which the lads were beating down from the trees in the jungle. And then there came over many a sad village in Madras a day when the bucket brought up no water from the well, when the grain bag was empty, and the cattle dead. Famine, stealthy and pitiless, prowled from village to village. Along the raised pathways between the empty fields the sad procession of mourners filed all day bearing to the river-side the bodies of the dead. Yet still the sun flamed ruthless in the sky. The villages gradually emptied of men; some had perished, while the rest had fled from their homes. To stay and hope was to die. At last came this rain. It did not bring food, but it brought the assurances of

future harvests, and set the poor souls to work and hope. Even food would grow cheaper and be more freely obtained as those precious drops pattered; for the rain came at the right time. Just when further hope seemed useless, when from the Indus all along the Ganges valley to the Bay, from Oudh, "the garden of India," and the principalities of the Rajput and the Mahratta, from the wild fastnesses of Sindh to the palm-fringed shores of the Eastern coast, the danger of a second year of drought was gathering force—just when it seemed inevitable that half India must be involved in the disasters of Madras, the rain-clouds hurried up in a night, and the peninsula awoke from despair.

The hot weather season had that year been in the beginning unusually mild; but May brought one of those spells of furnace-like heat which even residents in the plains of India rarely experience. The west wind had lost its last vestige of coolness, and day by day, night by night, it increased in fervour, until by the end of the month it was a sirocco, a scathing blast, choking and suffocating all existing things. The leaves were seen to wither off the boughs, birds dropped exhausted from the trees, and the absolute desolation of the Indian "hot weather" possessed the land. In the sky a fierce sun flamed all throughout the day, with a fury intolerable to animal life. At noon hardly a living creature would go abroad. The dogs lay gasping under the walls, and

by the road-sides the crows sat helpless, with beaks agape.

June succeeded to an awful legacy. The soil was saturated with heat, seamed with cracks, the trees, exhausted by the long struggle, surrendered at last to the pitiless sun, while the less hardy shrubs and the wild growths of bank and field were dead long ago. Looking at the landscape, it seemed impossible that even the germs of any fresh life could have escaped.

With July, however, should have come relief. But this year it was not to be. Clouds, laden with promise, gathered, and banked themselves against the horizon. Men looked to their ploughs, the oriole began to build her pendulous nest, and the deer stole out from their coverts in the early dawn to see if by chance any young shoots were yet above the ground. Still the clouds only mocked the land with a drop or two when a deluge was needed, and July wore on to the end.

So August, when the fields should have been ankle-deep in green corn, found the land a desert and its pleasant places untenanted. By the dried-up lake the egret and the crane had lingered awhile, but, despairing of rain, had gone, leaving their young broods, that should now have been finding their food in the softened ground, to die of hunger. Among the withered sedges the Indian coot had abandoned her nest of eggs, and in the tangle of dry water-weeds beyond the bittern's young might be found lying dead. Hushed, too, was

the noise of running water, and no longer was the black and white kingfisher seen hanging in the air, or his congener the emerald halcyon, darting, in a flash of many hues, from pool to pool. All the feathered lyrists of the gardens had departed, the warbler tribe that, with their curious notes, make the Indian spring glad, or brighten the deep foliage with their gorgeous colours.

Then September, another month of deadly heat. The deep pools dried, the beasts of the jungle, coming down at night to drink, found no water, and, urged by thirst, prowled audaciously round the villages. There was no need, however, for them to fear man now. The villages were in many places empty. By the well-side could be seen the skeleton of a buffalo, on the temple steps the bones of a dog, and under the meeting-tree, in the midst of the hamlet, a pile of household chattels, too heavy for the enfeebled villagers to carry away with them when they fled from their desolated homes to the distant centre where the Englishmen lived and where they were sure of food. And as the sad processions wound along the dusty, dreary roads, shelterless and the very ground glistening and flickering with the heat, the people might have thought their gods had indeed deserted them. But the patience of the Eastern under suffering, whether due to fatalism or not, is very pathetic, and not a shrine would be passed upon the painful route, that did not receive from each his uncomplaining reverence.

So the days wore on to October. The sowing of seed for next year's food now seemed hopeless, and another year of famine inevitable ; but the people did not repine. They waited patiently and pathetically, closing in round the famine works and doing their day's labour for a day's food, enduring "the evil times" without hope, but without murmur. Indeed, hope looked like folly. The news came from every side that crops had failed. The horizon of disaster seemed expanding every day. Even the stout heart of the English official began to fail him, and he spoke dismally of the future. The sky was still unflecked with clouds, and a great multitude was dying at his gates. Then suddenly at last, when it seemed almost too late, Nature relented.

A shadow of clouds had grown up—on the horizon, the great rain-wind blew, driving a tempest of dust before it, whirling the dead leaves from the trees, and signaling that help was coming. The birds could be seen gathering in the sky, and the cattle turned their heads to the wind, for they could scent the approaching showers. There would be a strange gloom while the dust storm was passing, and the people would throng gazing at the clouds or waiting for the rain that they knew was close behind. The streets would be filled with men and women, and all hands would be idle and all tongues silent. And then lo ! the rain. First great sullen drops pattering one by one, and then, as if it could not come down fast enough or thick enough, the torrent descended—not a mocking

shower, but a glorious life-saving deluge, brimming the tanks to overflowing, and sending the dead weeds swirling down the nullahs. In instant response the earth broke out into life. From forest and hill the familiar cries of Nature were again heard, the crane trumpeting to his mate as he stalks among the waving edges, the cry of curlew and plover wheeling above the meres, the clamour of wild fowl settling upon the waters, the barking of the fox from the nullahs. The antelope found out their old haunts, and from the villages the hyena and jackal skulked away to ravine and cave. Men and women came straggling back to their villages; ploughs were dragged afield; and, where a week ago was hopelessness and desolation, the only sounds of living things, the cries of beasts and birds quarrelling over the corpses, there awoke a glad renewal of busy peasant life.

The "Children of the Famine" were numerous in the land; little ones without kith or kin, whose lives had perhaps been saved by wonderful sacrifices of affection, only to depend henceforth upon the pity of strangers. These sad waifs and strays of the Drought who appealed to England for help were the offspring of a people remarkable among all others for the exercise of charity. Their parents, living, never sent the beggar from their door without some little dole of corn or oil. Yet, even in the prosperous days, when the village was doing well, when the bullocks went early afield, and the carts came laden home at sunset, there was not much gladness for these small

pagans. - The wandering minstrel, confident of welcome, would indeed come with his sitar and store of ballads, and under the tree in the village square the fire would be lit and the social hubble-bubble pass round, while the women, half-concealed, listened from the doorways to the song of SITA'S rescue from the demon-king of Lanka, or of the summer days when God-KRISHNA sported by Kavery's stream. The children, tumbling with the puppies in the firelight, had their share of such small joys as this. They were happy most of their time, just as the squirrel chirping in the tree above them might be happy. Yet they had few of the pleasures of child-life elsewhere. The infant of the Indian peasant enjoys but a simple existence, for the surroundings of his little world are fixed, and the minds that guide him are ignorant and superstitious. He finds life serious from the very first, and even babyhood is a solemn period. To English children a wood, a meadow, or a lane, spangled with wild flowers and gay with sunlit wings, furnishes a wonder-land of pretty and living playthings, abounding in delightful possibilities of nest and flower and rural excitement. But of these joys the Indian villager's children know little. They do not even learn the names of the birds and flowers and insects about them. Their fathers have never felt curious about such things, and so there is no one to take the child out into the world of nature, to show him its miracles, the tragedies and comedies of animal life, the wonders that lurk in the grass, that flit through the air, or abound in the

stream. In this wall of ignorance the Hindoo poets, it is true, have here and there pierced a window, but only to drape a quaint or weird fancy over it—that the asoca blooms when touched by a Brahmin girl's foot, that the tamarind is bedevilled, that the mango tips the love-god's surest shaft, that the kalpa grants every wish, that the partridge feeds on moonbeams, and so on. Awed rather than amused by these tales, the little ones in Indian villages are proportionally "old-fashioned." They are an odd folk, with their pretty winning ways, strangely gentle in their manner to each other, and very docile to authority. Accustomed to be pleased with so little, they find a quiet enjoyment in the merest trifles, and their grave dark eyes will brim with laughter at the faintest hint or suggestion of mirthfulness in their surroundings. But the poverty of their home denies them the changes of scene, and the succession of playthings, that brighten other children's lives; their creed and customs bar them from much or varied companionship, while a heritage of superstitious ignorance seals to them the greater part of the pleasures of living in their beautiful country.

Thus the days pass with the Hindoo child, playing with the dust when not asleep in it, and listening to ancient fictions. His mother believes them all implicitly—"Ignorance," says a Tamil proverb, "is an ornament to women"—so the child grows up believing them too. Not that our small brown urchin is neglected even at ordinary times. His mother has all a mother's instincts, and loves

him dearly. His eyes blackened with antimony to keep off ophthalmia and to look beautiful, his finger-tips tinged with henna to preserve the nails, the copper locket round his neck to warn off the evil ones—all attest her love. His father, too, sets great store by his boy, for until the child was born he was not certain, so the priest said, of happiness in the life to come, for he had no one to lead his soul by the hand to the land of the dead. The lad is his passport to better existence hereafter, and to his son alone must he look for the due performance of the funeral obsequies—those mystic rites without which in a future state he might sink to a lower grade of creation, and be born again, perhaps, as a jackal or an owl. And when the annual fair comes round the children are the first objects of thought. To celebrate the return to Ayudhia of the victorious Rama, the country-side is all *en fête*; the folk put on their best, and the youngsters are not forgotten. In a coat of purple gauze all spangled with golden thread, and a glistening tinsel cap, one little creature is perched on his father's shoulder, and another holds the finger disengaged on the hand that carries the cocoa-nut pipe. Behind them shuffle along the women of the family, heavily swathed in cloths of bright dyes; and the other children, tricked out in all their gala glories of bangle, nose-ring, and toe-stud, go hand-in-hand, chattering of all they expect to see, and glad with the hopes of promised toys. To those connoisseurs in early pleasure, the children of the West, there would not be in an Indian

fair much to tempt, but to the Hindu villager's child it is the Carnival of the year, the epoch from which all others date, the red-letter day of delights and sweetmeats. The father has borrowed from the money-lender a few pence to spend "on poojah," but they are spent upon the children. There is enough for all to have a ride on the elephant or camel in the merry-go-round, to swing in turn upon the red and gold chariot slung between the mango-trees, and to get a seat under the awning where the conjurer squats to work his wonders with snake and pigeon and egg. Something will be left for a visit to the toy-seller's booth, where playthings of clay and paper, but to the peasant's child possessions of surpassing preciousness, are bought. By the time that the pleasures of the fair have all been tasted, the toys chosen, and the sweetmeats divided, the sun is setting, and the weary little feet turn homeward. It is an eventless life, this of the peasant's child, but not an unhappy one, if judged by its absence of wants. By-and-by he will go to school, and for so many hours a day will sit rocking on his heels, while he intones, after his Brahmin preceptor, the rules for a virtuous life and the correct addition of a bunya's bills; but which were which the small pupil has never exactly distinguished, for deferential demeanour towards the cow and all his other betters gets somehow confused by a recollection of having to carry one to the next column, so that when he grows up he will leave his religion to the family priest, and the adding up of the bills to the ruinous money-lender.

But I must return from this digression, for here we are at Lucknow and making our way, the morning being cool, into the bazaars in quest of curiosities, chiefly pottery very singularly tinted with shades of green, yellow and brown.² From the bazaar we went to a hotel—"once the King of Oudh's general's palace," as the landlady was careful to tell us. But if it had been called "the king of Oudh's general's Spider's palace," it would have been no less appropriate. Such spiders I defy any other hotel in India to produce unaided from its own resources. I was literally *afraid* to go into my bath-room. Cobwebs of extraordinary bulk, dinginess and density, swayed from the ceiling; they were more like fishing-nets than cobwebs, and from behind the furniture of the room protruded inches of spiders' legs, that told of bodies lurking behind of formidable dimensions; every movement in the room was followed by a rush of some insect horror or another. But the rooms were delightfully cool, albeit gloomy, and as we held a levée of pottery-makers all day, we were, after our fashion, contented enough. These pottery-men point a moral; and to the eternal discredit of Lucknow taste be it said, that their beautiful art is being

² One specimen (intended by the maker as some portion of a hubble-bubble, being an elaborate *chilum* with an elaborate top) is worth special notice. It is of delicate fretted work, in the same curious shades of colour, about the size of an ostrich-egg, and standing on a plate of the same ware, makes an extremely effective ornament on our English table—price threepence.

utterly ruined. There is, you must know, a great talent localized in Lucknow for moulding pottery, and at one time very beautiful shapes—lotahs, saroyes, ag-dans, etc., used to be a speciality. But some well-meaning miscreant has set these simple folk copying the *Art Journal*, and the results are horrors of the most awful kind. I obtained, without much trouble, a few specimens of common work of good shapes, and then requested the production of "some superior ware." The men went off and soon returned laden with the triumphs of their art—so the miserable creatures thought. The first basket was uncovered, and oh! the abomination of it! a St. George, pale blue, was discovered killing a dragon, silver gilt. I groaned aloud. The men, perceiving that I was not gratified, hastened to assure me it was thought excellent of its kind, and to convince me, pulled out a book—a volume of the *Art Journal*—and turned up the original. It was the lid of a presentation vase to some regiment of English volunteers! The next basket contained at least twenty attempts to model in mud the well-known "boy with kids," and the third basket "the dying gladiator" (with elephantiasis in his legs and a dislocated hip), "a faun" (with a dropsical body and an infamous expression of countenance), and a "winged Victory." "Do you ever sell these?" I asked. "Plenty," was the reply; and then the unhappy man produced his station "order-book" and "testimonials." It was dreadful! Captain A. acknowledged receipt of "two boys with

kids, and one Victory, very well executed." Mr. B. put his signature to "a pair of gladiators, and do. Victories—this man works remarkably well." Major C. "a boy with kids, one St. George killing the dragon (large)—perfectly satisfied;" and so on to the end. The result is, that the Lucknow men are abandoning their own beautiful work,—and import the Azimghur pottery. Of this I bought a quantity. For ten rupees you can fill a barrel with very artistic ware; some a rich brown ground, but the generality black, with delicate silver tracery. The shapes are many of them perfection itself.*

At Lucknow we went through much sight-seeing. Now I have an extraordinary aversion to sight-seeing. I do not know why it is, but when I arrive in front of a "sight" I feel half-ashamed of showing much curiosity about it, and almost wish to be mistaken by the residents for a resident myself. If I could, I would always convey to the populace the idea that in the place I had just come from we had much finer sights—Imam-

* When at home last year I went into several Anglo-Indian houses, and I particularly noticed how, in their collections, they had failed to represent, with either taste or accuracy, the character of Eastern art. They had plenty of English flower vases in Cashmere work, writing sets of Bond Street pattern in Guzerati steel and gold work-boxes in carved Surat ware, and so on, all over the room. But not a single specimen either of Benares brass-work (not the common glittering ware, but such things as pandana, saroyes, &c.) or Azimghur pottery; even the cloth-work taken home, as a rule, is as English as possible. It is a pity that for a thing to look "native" should be, for so many English women and men in India an objection to it.

baras at least twice as large, and mosques to which theirs were but as pepper-boxes. But it is impossible to dissimulate with uniform presence of mind, at any rate in premises with which you are not acquainted, and your new-comer self is soon betrayed. For instance, we were walking towards a building, having dismissed our guide with scorn, and straightway proceeded to enter a doorway. The guide, who persisted in loafing behind, ventured upon a hint that it led nowhere, but with a withering glance I compelled his silence, and solemnly marshalled our party into the entrance of my own choosing. And lo! to my utter discomfiture, it ended about ten yards further in a wall—and bats innumerable. There was nothing for it but to return ignominiously to daylight, where the guide received us with a profound salaam—and calmly resumed the lead I had so ignominiously usurped. The rest of the party submitted sensibly to be taught, but I pretended to take my own way (and not seldom with disastrous results as to bats), turned my back upon the points specially commended to notice, and carried on an obligato of deprecatory comparisons. I have all my life been subject to this state of mind, and have often tried to analyze it into some mental twist, not absolutely contemptible, but in vain. Nevertheless it is quite sincere, and extends itself to others, so that, from hating to be shown sights myself, the spectacle of others being shown them dissatisfies me. My impulse is to humiliate their guide and

redeem the dignity of his victim. But one good result of my own system of sight-seeing is that I enjoy them after my own fashion thoroughly, a fashion with which "instruction" and information have little to do. Thus at the Secundrabagh I stayed by myself quite an hour at the place where Peel and his merry men of the "Shannon" dropped over the wall; but rather than inquire whose tomb it was that stood within, I remain ignorant of the dry fact to this day. As "sights," the buildings of Lucknow surprise by their novelty but affront by their imposition. One building alone commands respect—the great Imambara. The view from Aurungzebe's minaret at Benares was the most striking sight of all that Kashi has to show—superior in my opinion even to "the view from the river"—but almost the prettiest we had yet seen was that from the Imambara at Lucknow, where, with the "Roomi darwaza"—the Turkish gateway—below you on the right, you look across the well-wooded landscape at the exquisite grouping of cupolas and minarets among the trees. Just as in the Benares view the sprinkling of peepuls finely relieves the masonry, so here the presence of trees exalts the view from the mere positive of prettiness to a gracious superlative. Nothing in Lucknow gave me more pleasure than that morning's dawdling on the roof of that gigantic hall. Yet among the memories of a life must always remain the first view of the *entourage* of the Hosseinabad buildings. What a profligacy of labour those pinnacled and bedizened

buildings illustrate and, in detail, what an execrable taste. How could such a paint-and-plaster Government have ever hoped to live? Stroll over the Kaiser Bagh and mark the infamous tawdriness of the surface of those regal piles—and then see the same in a photograph! The deception is gross enough for tears. The impartial heliotype does not discern between the yellow ochre and plaster of a Kaiser Bagh and the marble and cornelian of a Taj. And when selecting photographs for taking to England, how sore is the struggle between the desire for effect and honesty! The Shah Nujf makes a splendid picture, but who would spend half a minute in looking at it in its realities? Lucknow, in my opinion, is saved by the sacred ruins of its Residency and by its Imambara from being altogether tawdry. About its picturesqueness there can be no doubt, and its beauties of road and garden are many. But it does not compel respect in the way, for instance, Benares does. Even the Wingfield Park, with its beautifully undulating site, its clever economy of space so as to contain as many roads with as little chopping up of the whole as possible, its casuarina dell, and its plant-house, is almost spoiled with statues. What a lovely bit the plant-house is! All India, the world has sent its foliage gems, and the result is a most beautiful little exhibition of leaves.

From the Wingfield Park we went to that preposterous building, the Martinière College, "sometimes called Constantia," so a book, the *Lucknow Album*, tells us—

the motto of the school being *Labore et Constantia*. It might therefore just as appropriately be "sometimes" called "Labore." I wonder if the boys in it ever make predatory expeditions in the direction of the statues on the roof? Those lions would not have their tails on a week in any English public school, and I can answer for myself that I should have made a collection of goddesses' mud noses in my first half year or been expelled. But they must be very well-behaved lads there, or the dormitories would before this have tempted many to death, for such incitement to roof-climbing feats I never met with. The ceilings of many of the rooms are adorned with Loves and Venuses, and these rooms, no doubt, are given up to only the little boys. But the Martinière is a fine pile, and for a school, with its water, its space and its airiness, it is admirably suited. Below the building is "the vault of General Claude Martin," an exquisitely cool apartment, of which the school authorities sagaciously avail themselves to keep their beer-casks in. But the key of the beer was kept upstairs—so I found. Need I say anything of the beautiful Residency Ruins, except that I got a packet of blue ipomea-seed from the Baily Guard? or of Secundrabagh, with a shrub for every Highlander's victim, or of the palace of "the heart's delight," Dil Koosha. How desperate the difference between its present jungle-grown appearance and its former glories when with elephants and cheetahs and falcons the Kings of Oudh went out

to the chase!—or of the Chutter Munzil, that sumptuous club, where mere mortals are housed as if they were king's courtiers, and where the servants understand as by a divine inspiration the cooling of drinks?

My letters, by the way, are headed "sight-seeing." I am afraid there is very little about "sights" in them. To tell the truth, I prefer to carry away from a place general impressions rather than statistical information—for in spite of all warning evidence to the contrary, I pretend to myself that it is not intellectual to be able to carry names and figures and dates, in my head. I always explain, when I am at bay for a fact, or brought up with my head against figures, that I have not an exact memory for statistics, but that my "*general impressions*" are always correct. I do this habitually, although I find that every other fool of my acquaintance congratulates and exculpates himself in exactly the same way. At the same time, it is only fair to myself to say that the *worst* fools of my acquaintance have sticky memories for facts and figures, and have no sympathy with broad impressions. These men "see" a place, learn its exact length, breadth and age, but feel no more of its spirit or influence than a vulture does of a field of recent battle. My chief delight in going to a new place in India is to watch some of its people "at home," and to test the capabilities of its bazaars. I have already mentioned the curious pottery ware of Lucknow, but another manufacture (of which only three pieces rewarded our search) deserves

special mention. One of the three is now before me. It is a vase of very simple shape, about eight inches high, made of a very heavy black metal, probably pure zinc. Round the base runs two rims of silver, and from these rims spring seven leaves, about an inch wide at the centre (where the bulge of the vase comes), and tapering to fine points round the top. There is no rim at the top, nor any other ornamentation whatever. I may add that the "silver" stands out from the black metal foundation, and that it is not stamped, the inside of the vase being quite smooth. The venation of the leaves is boldly done, and they are evidently copies from nature—the hart's-tongue fern, I should have said, if they had been English work. The price paid for the vase was Rs. 8; they asked Rs. 12. Besides the pottery above mentioned, and this handsome ware, we found nothing. Tinsel caps are made in perfection in Lucknow, and remarkable ingenuity is often shown in the manipulation of colours, an infinity of effective changes being rung on the usual green, blue and red. It is hardly necessary to say that we bought some "Lucknow bangles;" the proper price to pay is Rs. 13 for twelve bangles, all silver (cut into diamonds), and Rs. 18 for the dozen if gold-washed.

But Lucknow, if comparatively sterile of Curiosities—as the Delhi shopkeeper prefers to spell the word—enabled me to see a den of opium-eaters. Escorted by the Kotwal, or head of the city police, we turned one

afternoon from the main bazaar up an impossibly narrow lane, so narrow that a dog that was lying asleep in it seriously obstructed us. The constable in advance told it authoritatively to move on, or "pass away," but it neither spake nor moved. Then from his place forth stepped a chuprassy of tender years and kicked the hound—but it nor swooned nor uttered cry. It only snored. Then rose the kotwal, an aged man, and placed his foot upon its stomach, and then, like summer tempest, came its howls, and down the narrow lane it fled precipitate. The obstruction thus happily removed, we squeezed ourselves out of the gorge to find ourselves in front of, what might have been, a long cow-shed. It was, however, the licensed opium-shop. On the floor of one compartment lay a number of men and women, the head of each pillowed on the nearest part of the body of the next, and all of them, strange to say, young. And the expression of their faces! It has fixed for me, for ever, the lotus-eaters. As we entered, all turned their faces towards us, but not one moved from the ground. They were all smiling, not the maudlin smile of drunkenness, but the beatified smile of those who die happily. It was evident they did not *see* us, for they looked through us and away beyond us. We were dream figures to them. The gracious alchemy of the drug transmuted their gross surroundings, and our own unwelcome selves, into the playthings of a pleasant fancy. Do you remember in "Realmah," how the people used to buy their

sleep in little slabs—a blue kind being superior, and carrying with it sweet dreams? The girl lying in the doorway had certainly bought the bluest of all. With her eyes swimming, and though intent not staring, she looked at us, not one at a time but all at once—just as the eyes of a full-face portrait seem to be following you, until you find that every one else in the room is being followed by them as well—on her lips playing a smile, poor thing, of seraphic purity and sweetness. Another group, lying in the open air, was not less interesting—two boys. One was a lad of peculiarly high-bred look, with a naturally gentle face. His clothes showed that he was of the upper class. On the same cloth was stretched a dirty young scaramouch, bare-headed, his hair a disorderly tangle, and his clothes of the coarsest and dirtiest. And yet the better of the two prepared the pipes for the other, who, all the while, lay with his head on his companion's breast, waiting calmly with drowsy eyes fixed on the wall before him till the gentle voice of the other bade him turn to inhale the ready pipe. It was indescribably strange to hear the soft voices and watch the quiet—*gentle* is the only word—behaviour of these unhappy creatures. One thing I learnt from the visit. It requires two to smoke a pipe of opium. Each prepares the pipe for the other—rolls up the pill of opium, plugs it into the pipe, and holds it over the light that burns by his side till it catches fire and bubbles—until one or other is in dreamland, and then the owner of the “shop” serves the

survivor till he too joins his friends in the other world. There are no troubles there, and till the drug ceases to work all are happy.

We reached Agra, at noon, and, more welcome than angels, found waiting at the station the "representative" of the hotel to look after the luggage, &c., and let us get off as quickly as possible. What a luxury it is getting into a cool hotel after a two mile drive at twelve o'clock in the day at the end of May, none can know but those who have experienced it!

After our fashion we proceeded, after icing ourselves, to give audience to sellers of local ware, and very soon the verandah was littered with soap-stone and pietra dura. I had so often bought both before, that the vendors soon abandoned their first eagerness to sell us their things at eight times their value and settled down to business. But, just as at Lucknow, the *Art Journal* patterns were considered the *chefs-d'œuvre*, and the sellers were surprised beyond measure that we scorned the "*namuna*" given them by the Collector or the Padri Sahib. Eventually we got what we wanted at our own prices, and as in the present taste for Indian art some may be buying soap-stone or inlaid work, it may interest them to know what "our own prices" were. A Taj fitting into an eleven-inch box, and of the *best* work was Rs. 5; boxes, the very handsomest we could pick out, soap-stones measuring 7 inches across were Rs. 3 each, and plates,

our own selection again, Re. 1 each. A white marble box, oval, 6 inches long, with a spray of jessamine, was Rs. 8; and a book 4 inches long, with a "Taj flower" in cornelian, Rs. 3-8-0. By far the best specimens of their wares are those of the old patterns. Elaborate but not agreeable wreathings of vine-leaves and grape bunches are very costly—but they are not "native art" at all. The native does not use the vine-leaf and fruit as an ornament when left to himself. Impossible lilies of the mediæval type are his own taste, and in the combination of colours in these he excels. The jessamine is his own idea too, and so is the curled-up snake, and both are very good in their different ways. The carvings in soap-stone—but the soap-stone lends itself so delightfully to the chisel—are some of them wonderfully delicate; but is it not curious that modelling the Taj has not suggested their modelling other buildings, or parts of them? The top of Etmatdowlah's tomb, for instance, or the Secundra gateway, or that curious Chinese-looking pillar and capital at Fatehpur Sikri would make charming and very acceptable mementos of those objects.

Our first sight was of course the Taj, but I am certainly not going to venture upon description. Of course too it was insplints, it always is. The tinkering, no doubt, will be finished some day, but while it lasts is a nuisance. When I was last at Agra, the top of the Taj was off! And I remember well the disgust of an English party who had come to visit it. But some compensation was in

store for them, for they chanced to be there when a staircase discovered to lead under the Taj from the platform on the river side was being opened. The "discovery" was due to the loquacity of an old man who, looking on at the repairs, casually informed the engineer in charge that he had been a workman on previous repairs—about half a century before—and that he had worked at breaking open a certain staircase. Acting on his instructions the staircase was found, opened, and followed as far as an octagonal room from which it was evident the passage continued right under the Taj. But the exploration went no further, the engineer in charge wisely bethinking himself that as the staircase was no doubt closed up from prudential motives, there might be danger to the Taj from again undermining it. We returned to the Taj after dinner, there being a splendid moon, and the whole of the next day too we spent in the garden and the mosque, steeping ourselves in the beauty of the place. Next morning we drove to Rambagh and Etmatdowlah's tomb. The latter was undergoing "thorough repair," and did not look the better under the process. The Rambagh of course was looking its worst, but the pleasant river breeze was there as usual. I noticed in this garden a variety of "plumbago," upon which an immense number of "burnet" moths (that curious connecting link between moths and butterflies) were feeding. On a small petunia patch close by there were several "hawk-moths" of at any rate two

species (it was about half past-seven in the morning), so that I should think Rambagh would be a fine hunting-ground for local lepidopterists. We drove home through the bazaar and made a collection of inkstands—dumpy little bottles, glazed—fine blue, apple green, or scarlet; others blue, black and white worked in patterns of stars, rosettes, etc., artistic and effective; and we further chanced upon a colony of metal-workers. Their ware, of brass upon iron or a white metal, is well worth buying; a rupee purchasing a handsome tumbler kind of thing, and twelve rupees a whole set—seraye, lotah, tray, “tumbler” with lid, also pan-dan and hookah stand. We had found work of the same kind at Lucknow, but there it was all of one pattern, rings of brass roses or a chequered pattern upon black metal, and never in any case so carefully finished as this at Agra. Cap-making is in great perfection here, flowers and stars of tinsel being curiously worked into the *reverse* of the net or muslin ground-work, and giving the cap a subdued glitter, and richer in appearance than when the ordinary tinsel gawds are sewn on to the outside of the material. What a widowed and woe-begone appearance Agra has; and, considering its resident population, how deserted it appears. Contrasted with Lucknow the difference is very striking; and even with dead-alive Allahabad, Agra looks dull. Allahabad of course has the advantage in population; but this does not explain its habitually waste appearance. I was in Agra for eight months once,

and do not speak from this last visit's impressions. The drive to Secundra—a rain-storm having cooled the air—was delicious, but the only inhabitant out of doors that evening was one hungry-looking individual pounding along on a dejected pony. The collector, by the way, was busy cutting down trees along the Secundra Road—an excellent process when either the trees are too numerous or are dead. But what object there can be in cutting down good trees when there are no others, I was puzzled to guess. The same reasoning, when discovered, may explain why no one looks after the Taj road. Trees along it would surely look better than dunghills.

What a pleasure Fatehpur Sikri is! Wander where you like, it is all delightful.

In the elephant stables we collected a handful of peacocks' tail feathers, and disturbed in our subterranean ramblings many owls. What a paradise of birds this deserted palace-city is; wildernesses of green parrots nestle in it; nearly every bush holds a dove's nest; the robins—and they are in hundreds—have a bewildering choice of secure holes—and the owls! I wonder all the owls of India do not come and live here.

The khansamah has not grown more active with years, but then no place could so tempt to loitering and laziness as this curious place. So thoroughly is dawdling in the air, that the very hens put off laying their eggs till they are stale. The very leanest of dogs—poor beast, with him it is a perpetual Ramazan: *in*

pauperum tabernis there is no great choice of leavings—proved also the very laziest. We threw him a bone, but before coming to fetch it he stopped to yawn and stretch. Meanwhile a crow came up, and instead of seizing the morsel, proceeded to offer a trite remark or two, and then picking up the bone, hopped off leisurely and sideways. But it was too much exertion for it to carry it on to the wall, so when the dog dawdled up to investigate matters, the bird sauntered off. When the dog had finished with the bone (he *did* finish with it eventually) there was not even a mark left on the pavement to show where it had been. Nevertheless the crow having, in its own monotonous way, been meanwhile explaining to the public that affairs worthy their attention were in progress, several of the tribe dropped in, and the dog having dropped off to sleep, swaggered as if they were bishops all over the scene of the repast, and finding no traces of a bone, decided in a dilettante way that the dog must have swallowed it. To make sure, I suppose, they hopped on to his stomach, but not a bit did the lazy beast budge. The sun set; and where the crows had cawed, owls were chuckling, and the beetle had replaced the bee—but the dog slept on.

I wish I could have stayed with it for a week. It takes a week to exhaust Fatehpur Sikri and to "*insense*" yourself with it—just as the Taj takes six months. But time alas was fugitive, and two days later therefore we were going back past the Kos Minars. What grand

old ideas of mile-stones those were ! Only now they serve the night jar for shambles, and their rents are full of the remains of moths, Golgothas of the creatures of the crepuscule. Changing horses at the top of the hill ! What a disgusting life this life by spurts must be ; a life taken up in doing only the halves of things. No wonder dâk horses have so little self-respect. Watch that one—no sooner does he feel himself free than he tries to sneak off to his stall, carrying the harness with him. The knowledge that he will be sworn at, pulled up with a jerk, and perhaps kicked in the stomach for doing so, will not prevent him from doing exactly the same to-morrow. After all, though, there is a brighter side to this half-job life. It must be a relief when one has a long dreary road to travel to know that “a change” is half way. Marriage, after all, is something like “changing horses.”

It is extraordinary the number of ruined and half-ruined tombs one passes on the way from Fatehpur Sikri into Agra. They must all have been men of substance, those sleepers. And no doubt there were once gardens round the tombs. And once, no doubt too, Agra was a very fine city to live in—when the merchants of the world streamed in to sell their wares to the ladies who lived among the cool marble corridors of the Fort Palace, the playthings of those most royal Moguls ; or, at Fatehpur Sikri, were smuggled, with their bales of spices and silks and gems, along the covered ways over

the elephant gateway to the fairy apartments of the "wives" of Akbar—surely the most splendid of all lovers and cosmopolitan even in his loves. But here am I, just as the carriage turns up the hill into Agra, going in memory up the hill again to Fatehpur Sikri; and, seriously, I wish I were going back to it. I am leaving India "for good" before long, and of all the memories I shall take with me, none will be more permanent than that of Akbar's Folly. The views of Benares from the minarets and from the river will live for me as long as the memory of the Taj, but Fatehpur Sikri will certainly outlive them all.



Lucknow has nothing in it to remember for its own sake. The Residency, Secundrabagh, and the Muchi Bhawan, owe their immortality to other reasons than their own beauty—for its buildings are all paint and plaster; its Hosseinabad Imambaras are tawdry barbarisms without, and ludicrous bottle khanas within. But Delhi has added one more to the wonders that will live for ever (to me) for their own sakes alone—the Kutb Minar. In our visit to it there was every accident of advantage. The drive there in the cool night was perfection. What a gracious alchemy it is, that moonlight! Maidans become meadows, dust disappears, and whatever was wanting to the picturesqueness of the people and their homes is added. Getting up in the morning "to see the sun rise" was a success even beyond expect-

tation. What a spectacle it is, that overlooking the dead cities, tracing out the boundaries of fort and palaces and pleasure-gardens! In the distance the ruins of *the first Delhi*, and below us, round the feet of the Minar, the tombs of Humayun and his kin, the lofty arches and colonnades, great gateways and shapely domes! Oh, you who have never been to India—go.

Having glanced over half provinces and grouped cities, we criticized, individually, palace and pleasaunce, next the several points in each colonnade or arch; and at last, our examination becoming microscopic, we noticed the peacock mounting guard upon the broken pillar, the bull pacing sturdily across the garden-desert, the girl balancing her pots on her way to the sheltered well.

Every one has read of the great flights of butterflies that have astonished travellers—great flights of butterflies that cloud the sun as they pass overhead, that drive their way even against the wind, and do not hesitate at the ocean itself. Right out in mid-ocean these flights of suicides are sometimes met with, but whence and whither they come and go men of science cannot tell. Now, at the foot of a gateway near the Kutb grows in profusion a thorny shrub, the same that amuses the camels and goats among the ruins of the Fatehpur Sikri hill, and on the particular morning we were there the whole thicket was absolutely ablaze with white butterflies. I went down to examine it, and such a sight I never saw before. Each bush was alive with the insect

in every stage ; the chrysalids were so thick in places that they touched each other, and while I watched they "hatched" by scores and hundreds. I picked a spray of them, and in half an hour every chrysalis had let loose a butterfly. In another half hour the wings were strong and the butterflies were flown. In my hands remained a twig with a dozen empty shells. This multiplication of life was simply *awful*. Every other leaf had a caterpillar feeding on it, and among the caterpillars the mothers of the next generation were busy laying their eggs. The bushes were literally "alive." And not a butterfly left the place of its birth. As soon as its wings were strong enough to carry it, it hovered about the shell it had just left, and in a minute or two found its mate, and, thus, all on one inch of a twig, the life was lived from egg to caterpillar, from caterpillar to chrysalis, and from chrysalis to butterfly. Death too was all prepared for them by the side of their cradles. Noticing that in very many cases the butterflies did not move when I came near, I picked up one with my hand from the spot on which it seemed to be resting, and then I discovered the horrid secret of its apathy. A spider was holding it to the branch—a beautiful pale green spider—and, my eyes opened, I soon became aware of the multitudes of the same kind that swarmed among the butterflies. If I waved my hand over a bush a hundred butterflies might rise from a branch, but a hundred would remain motionless. A spider had hold of each.

To give you an idea of the enormous creation and destruction that was going on in this patch of scrub that morning, I saw what I mistook at first for a bird's nest—a globular mass of web pendant from a twig. On taking it off I found it was only the web of a common “wolf” spider, and that it weighed as nearly as possible half a pound. (I am a fisherman, and can tell weight in my hand very nearly to an ounce.) It was all dust and spiders' web and dead butterflies. And you may calculate, if you like, how many dead and sucked-dry butterflies go to make up half a pound ! Again, in a corner just as you have seen dried leaves drifted together by the wind, I saw and sifted with my hands a thick drift of butterflies' wings. These were the remains of tens of thousands. And after this sight I can easily believe in the vast numbers of the flights that travellers have seen—or in any other marvel of nature.

Walking back to the dāk bungalow I picked up—what a spot, by the way, this is for mineralogists—a crystal of a pale topaz colour, and in it were embedded several grass seeds. I may of course be wrong in calling it a “crystal,” but it is a transparent piece of mineral, and I may be wrong about its enclosures, but those who have seen it agree with me in their being “grass seeds.” If they are, the stone is very curious, and apart from its own pretty interest points a moral, for if we think these ruins of Delhi old, how old are we to think these grass seeds ? Our first evening at Delhi was spent on the Ridge,

where we saw all that was to be seen, the plain below still dotted with the fireplaces of those who had attended Lord Lytton's great "Assemblage," the racquet-court from behind which, in the mutiny, the sepoy had seven pot shots at (now) Major Harris, of China renown, and all its other 'sights,' and so home by the Cashmere Gate, where Lord Napier of Magdala records his having put up a memorial slab to the Heroes of the Gate. But everything is so overgrown, so tame, and so untraceable, that the Ridge, unless Nicholson could be your cicerone, cannot thrill you as reading its history does. It is very disappointing. One place alone speaks to you—the spot where Nicholson fell. What a murderous place it is! And think of a gun raking it from end to end! No wonder even the British soldiers crouched behind the buttresses and waited "for a lead." And then the splendid pluck of the man who led them—led them, alas, only a few yards.

Close by the spot is a temple, a delightfully shaded nook, where seeing a tempting display of brass oddities—and not recognizing the fact of its being a shrine—B. stopped to bargain. The scene with the priest was ludicrous in the extreme. He was cleaning his teeth with a twig at the door when B. halted and with impious hands pointed at the glittering display and asked "How much for the lot?" He replied, but the only word B. caught was "five," and, thinking he was bargaining, offered "three," and was proceeding to lift a many-headed god off its place, when the priest, his lot in one hand and "tooth-brush" in

the other, warned him off. Astonished at such conduct on the part of a vendor of brass-work, B. remonstrated; but he maintained absolute silence—merely looking B. in the face and going on with his tooth-brush. Seeing what was going on I hurried up and explained to B. that the old man was a priest, that the place was a temple, and that the wares were not for sale. Meanwhile, the priest had disappeared inside, and, tinkling his hand-bell, began his poojahs, so B. apologized, gave four annas to the minister, and went away. But I believe none the less, that if the woman had not come up just then the priest would have bargained with us for his paraphernalia. At any rate, there was no ill-feeling manifest in his manner of putting away our four-anna bit.

This failure at trading reminds me of more successful efforts in the Chandni Chowk, whither, as soon as we had finished with the Ridge, we bent our way in quest, as is our fashion, of curiosities of local art. Delhi jewelry being cheaper in England than at Delhi, we refrained from purchasing; nor, for the same reason, did we waste our substance in riotous ivory-work. We found, however, a variety of that black and silver metal-work which is made at Lucknow also—a coarsely made but effective ware, well worth buying in spite of the prices asked for it. A small saraye was priced at Rs. 4. The fact is that the Imperial Assemblage ruined most and enriched a few of the Chandni Chowk tradesmen, and whether ruined or enriched, the result to us was the

same—enhanced prices; the poor man wished to recoup, the rich was too proud to haggle and descend. Delhi produces a rough but interesting pottery—blue designs on a white-glazed ground; and though the generality is very poor and common-looking, we found in one shop a few specimens that looked very like, but much handsomer than, much of the old “blue china” lately in vogue. For one piece we gave about fivepence, and for two others threepence each. There is one shop in the chowk where, as the sign-board tells you, “European gentlemen often buy *Quriosities* for Europe,” but these curiosities with a Q were of the commonest kinds of Benares, Lucknow, and Agra productions, and extravagantly priced. Next door, for a couple of rupees, we picked up a set of brass instruments such as the orthodox use for their poojas—a delightful set of absurdities, worth, to my notion, any amount of *Art Journal* Lucknow-work or “Paris fashion” Cashmere ware. Pictures of the gods of the country (though immoderately priced at eight annas each) were too tempting to let slip, so we got an assortment of sky-blue deities with crimson feet. One picture is delicious. A gilt-faced Krishna is fluting to a bevy of fawn-coloured ladies in an indigo stream, but the artist, to prevent the foremost concealing those behind, has been compelled to depict them one above the other, and as each is visible to the waist, it is dreadful to think of the length of the hindmost lady’s legs, supposing them all to stand on the same level. A similar

art difficulty causes all the lotus-flowers on the pictures to look as if they were trundling along the surface of the stream on their edges like wheels. I wanted to get more of these pictures, but could find none. It is curious that no locality should make pictures its speciality. Our find at Delhi was an accident, for they are not drawn there, but came, we were told, "from Muttra." But then either Muttra or Hurdwar was always given wherever we went as the source of everything. One more of our Delhi purchases is worth noticing—the red and blue "saloo" cloths stamped with silver and gold. For a Fancy Ball I can imagine nothing more economically effective. The price is five annas a yard, and the effect really brilliant—but I have something more than a suspicion that Manchester was concerned in its manufacture. On the whole Delhi was disappointing in its local curiosities, but then the city is given up to Manchester body and soul. The Queen's Gardens are well worth a morning visit, but what a pity its possibilities are not better availed of. The "canal" might be made a very charming feature; and possessing, what few other public gardens in India possess, splendid trees and in great number, these gardens are capable of infinite beauties. When I was there a large lagerstroemia (I think it was) was in full blossom—a magnificent vegetable.

In a "Sight-Seeing" letter I ought perhaps to have mentioned the Jama Masjid and the Fort, and the other notabilities of Delhi. But so many sight-seers have done

that, that I refrain. I would only say that if the shoe I saw at the Masjid as "Ali's shoe" was really his, cobblers have learnt nothing new for some centuries.

From Delhi we returned to the hills and Naini Tal, narrowly escaping a native "gentleman" as a travelling companion. This disagreeable person had with him—by way of personal "luggage," a hooka, an open bundle of eatables—chiefly pickles of vilest odour—and a stale cut melon. Without shoes or stockings, and his turban tilted on one side of his head, he lolled along a whole seat, insolent because partially educated. Nor was it of any use explaining that as there was another native gentleman in the next compartment he might as well get into it "to oblige a lady." He said something in an off-hand way, but his mouth was too full of *pan* for him to be intelligible. Fortunately, another empty carriage was discovered, so this discreditable specimen of the half-civilized Hindoo remained in possession. My servant, however, thinking to gratify me, audibly remarked something ungracious about the "black man" travelling in sahibs' carriages—but he got a box on the ears.

After all, "sight-seeing" *is* pleasanter in cool latitudes. I do not go so far as to say I would rather be a polar bear than a salamander, but merely that "the hills" of India are, taken all round, pleasanter in June for-out-of-door pursuits, than the plains. There are, it is true, no great choice of Golden Temples, Tajes, Imambaras or

Kutb Minars among the hills. Nor is the Almorah fort to be compared with Ramnagar at Benares, or, with the Agra fort, or the Delhi one. But the Taj is not so white as Nunda Debi, nor has Lucknow anything so beautiful, nor Benares so reverend, as the Trisool. My last letter only brought me as far as Delhi, so I must wrench my mind back to the plains for an hour. It is, to my thinking the *dernier pas qui coûte*: at any rate in letter-writing. One starts off jauntily enough, but the pen tires with the legs, and at the end of a long journey one does not rush to record impressions with any of the enthusiasm of the beginning.

From Delhi, then, we railed to Moradabad, and here, though "sights" were wanting, we found "local art" in most satisfactory activity. To the bazaars, therefore, we went. There is a Lowther Arcade in Moradabad, the queerest one in the world—with such shabby toys, and such shabby everything! Very little to buy, however, except lac bangles. This manufacture is here carried to perfection; and nowhere else had we seen such a variety, either in colour or pattern, displayed for sale. A curious pigment, paint mixed with mica dust, is a characteristic of the common wares, and most of the "chillums" are one pattern, a pink on a brown ground, with raised flowers at regular intervals round the rim. But, as you may imagine, it was not *here* that we made the discovery of local talent above referred to. *That* was in the bazaar proper, the High Street of the city, and once found, we had discovered the prototype

of nearly all the metal-work of Upper India. Benares, Lucknow, Agra, Delhi—all borrow this special ware from Moradabad ! That is to say, all the variations in brass-upon-iron work that I have described as being of Agra or Lucknow or Delhi, are nothing more nor less than copies of the Moradabad work, or even, in some cases, Moradabad work itself imported. And it is well worth importation, for in Moradabad this ware is carried to great perfection. Nor are the prices at all excessive. A beautiful little *lotah* on a tray is Rs. 3, a very handsome *suraye* (steel on black metal), Rs. 7, an eight-inch plate Rs. 2-12. Put either of these specimens by the side of those sold at Agra or Delhi, and the contrast is very striking; for, as is so often the case, only the inferior qualities are imported, the real article, like green Chartreuse, being obtainable “only from the makers.” One fact about Moradabad I must place on record. Its inhabitants are the one vile race I have met in India. Low-bred Mahomedans, the greater number, their manners are insolent to the last degree. Every face wears, for the European, a scowl or a sneer, and to ask a question is to meet with an insult. But they are not “independent.” On the contrary, I pushed one man with my foot off his stool for refusing repeatedly to answer a question which he heard me asking him, and as he hurt his head in falling he wept. A Kumaoni is just as liberal with his impudence; but if you touch him he will, the chances are, retire to a distance and throw stones at you and your pony. The Moradabad men, on the contrary,

are *pure* blackguards, insolent only till kicked. This trait of their character I confided to a civilian of the station as a discovery ; but he told me that it was a generally received opinion, and that officials had to tolerate to-day as much insolence as in 1858 would have justified the annihilation of the city. The Parsee is not always lovable, and Kumaonis are not, to a man, courteous ; but the low Mahomedan of the Moradabad bazaars is simply vile.



In the cool night we started for Naini Tal, and at daybreak found ourselves at Kaladungi, the pheasants calling from the coverts, the tattoos under the trees still asleep. A melancholy meal—sweetened only by the thought of the hills before us—discussed, and a pony and a jhampan selected, we started. How wonderful it is, that gradual and yet rapid influence of the champagne air of higher latitudes on the lungs and spirits of comers from the plains ? Before Mungowli was reached, I had so put the plains heat out of me that no effort of memory could recall the sensations of 100° under a punkah. The sun a terror ? *Impossible !* It was a cheerful luminary, prettily chequering the landscape with lights and shades, and waking up birds to twitter, butterflies to flutter, and men and women to go picnicking. I adored the sun. Its grateful warmth just sufficed to make idleness pleasant, and shady oaks the shadier.

Bheem Tal was our first halt, and I should be

more base than usual if I omitted to record the beauties of that march. The approach is delightful, and unique in its delights. Let it be a cool morning, light clouds driving across the sky, slicing off the mountain tops and patching their sides with shadows, as you debouch from the gorges upon the levels of Bheen Tal. On a sudden you find yourself in the midst of English scenery! Fields of corn with intervals of grass land, the cattle grazing, and clusters of whitewashed huts overgrown with gourds, imitating English cottages as well as they can. A broad lane runs down between steep banks, upon which English flowers are growing, and the hedges are full of white dog-roses; and after a mile or two, the road being all the way as level as any country lane at home, you come upon the reedy mere—Bheem Tal. On the marsh land are feeding a hundred cattle and twice as many horses, while along the road that skirts the pasturage the drovers and herdsmen are camped in knots. From the reed comes all day long the cry of the plover, and from the woods beyond the cuckoo shouts from early morning late into the night.

We spent a delightful day at the dāk bungalow—doing nothing, and yet busy enough in doing it. Beneath us, the proud drakes were conveying their flotillas of ducks and ducklings across the Tal, and on the marsh land beyond the lake men and boys were all day long hunting their cattle to and fro, wading through the reeds to circumvent a bull on battle bent, or splashing through

an arm of the lake to drive back a straying horse. And surely never did beasts keep men so busy. From every corner of the pasturage came the threatening lowings of the bulls of the different herds, and in spite of vigilant eyes they were all day long doing battle. The horses were just as restless; now starting off, a drove together, to scour the circuit of the lake: now in pairs squealing at each other, as they pawed and pranced about. These tattoos must be of a very volatile kind; forgetting, at the first hint of a holiday, all the terrors of past bondage, like the negro slave of the olden days who, his day's task over, and his sore back oiled, used to plunge at once into the dissipations of the banjo and the double-shuffle. In the middle of the day a rain-storm suddenly drifted up, banking the sky all round with slaty clouds. In a few minutes all differences among the kine were settled, and the various herds huddled together, while the tattoos congregated amicably under trees. But their owners, men of all weathers, never moved an inch. They simply spread their brown blankets over their heads and sat out the pelting storm in the open, dotting the plain like great mole heaps on an English meadow. The rain-storm over, each mole-hill heaved, and a human being issued forth, and having spread out his blanket to dry, set off chasing the once more rampant tattoo and the already combative bull. We also sallied forth to see the "Seven Lakes" that mark the course of the great gorge that takes the waters of these hills

into the Terai. These lakes are each of them marvels of beauty, and each differs from the next. Some are clear pools of water, into which on all sides the pine-covered hills slope easily, the trees growing, literally, at the water's edge; others are dark, deep tarns, with wild bare rocks jutting out from and overhanging them; others are miniature Windermeres, here green turf pied with large daisies creeping to the water, there a cluster of bushes drooping over, and again, a large stone giving a foothold to a tangle of ferns and affording the flashing kingfisher a watch-tower. Wild raspberries, laden with yellow fruit, and delicious, grew in richest abundance on either side the path, and wherever you looked, white roses and jessamine caught the eye. There were some beautiful orchids hanging from the trees, and the wealth of mosses was wonderful to see. Now and then a pheasant stole from off the path before us, and from all the hills we heard the khakur barking. Such a spot! If I were going to be in India another hot weather, I should take a tent with me, pitch it by the third of the "Seven Lakes," and make constant excursions to it from Naini Tal. As it was, evening was closing in and we had to return, and long shall I remember that exquisite walk home. Nowhere so steep as to tire, the path wound in and out among the fern-laden rocks, here passing under a group of oaks deeply festooned with hanging moss, there crossing a noisy brook with reed-choked backwater in which

dragon-flies by hundreds flashed about, and again mounting some grassy knoll, to give you a lovely peep through oak and pine, of hills that caught the last rays of the sun, and dells already blue with mists. On a sudden the beauty ceased, and we found ourselves in a great tea-garden, the disciplined regiments of sturdy bushes encamped along the bared hill-sides, each camp divided from the next by low stone walls. And so through the tea-garden down upon the plain again, "and lo! the shining levels of the mere." The cuckoos were asleep, but the night-jars had taken up the song, and from the marsh land, instead of the antiphony of peewits, we had the chorus of "the tuneful natives of the reedy lake," and after a ten-mile walk we needed no better lullaby.

Next morning we started for Ramghar. This march is, by far, the finest on the way to Almorah. All are beautiful, for, given hills and oaks and pines, and an unlimited supply of ferns and flowers, it is not difficult to imagine ravishing landscapes. But on the way to Ramghar the oaks are finer, the hills statelier, and the undergrowth more luxuriant and various, than elsewhere. At least, I think so. By the way, what a number of "English" flowers grow wild here—anemones, forget-me-nots, columbine, aconite, wild strawberries, mullen, St. John's wort, dog-roses, violets, clematis, buttercups, and many more. Half the ferns too are "English" ferns, and among the trees how many are familiar! The holly, fir, pine—but why go on with the list?—and then

the mistletoe, bunching itself on the crab apples ! Why are not these hills in England, or Englishmen on these hills ? Here and there only, one of our countrymen has settled, building a cosy house, with orchards and vegetable gardens stretching down the hill sides ; but the days are yet to come when English enterprise will really thrive in the beautiful hills of Kumaon.

What villianous quadrupeds those of the hills are ! The tattoo, if left unwatched for a moment, plants himself across the narrow path to eat the herbage on the edge of the khud, leaving you just room to squeeze between his heels and the rock. At other times, he lounges round corners just as you are going to turn them yourself, and always takes the safe side. The cattle, again—if there are calves in the drove it is a work of some address to get past the mothers ; and when a bull takes up “an attitude of observation” in the middle of the narrow road, head on to you, he is a detestable beast altogether. Even the goats, elsewhere ridiculous, arrogant terrors on their native heath, and scrambling about upon the shingly hill-sides, shower down stones as you pass below. Mountaineers no doubt learnt the lesson of these troublesome tactics of stone-rolling upon an invading force, from the goats. The monkeys, again, browsing unsuspected on the acorns overhead, affect a sudden terror at your approach, and just as you are passing under them the boughs above you are swayed with a mighty commotion, and the whole troop plunges

across over your pony's head, and down the khud on the other side.

Just about half way a curious incident occurred.

I was riding ahead of my wife's jhampan, and turning a corner, came upon a spot where all the pine-trees on a small plateau on the left had been cut down, and the stumps fired—an acre of desolation, charred grass, and blackened stumps tipped with grey ashes. As I passed, it seemed to me that a stump *moved*. I looked at the place, and, satisfied that I was wrong, was turning my head away again when, with just the corner of an eye, I saw another stump *distinctly stir*. The jhampan came round, and I called out to my wife. "It is very curious, but I could swear I saw those stumps moving—*there!*" Another stump had stirred. And while we were both staring at the place the whole congregation of stumps with one accord got up and rushed from their places and lo! tails erect, a colony of lungoors vanished down the khud. One or two remained behind, squatting on the stumps or crouching among the ashes and cinders, and though we saw them take their seats, every movement was a surprise to us, for it was only by their movements that you could count their number. While quiet, they were quite invisible, though only a few yards off.

On the Ramghar Road. There is one piece of this road detestable beyond measure—a steep rag of road, deep in parts, with a fine, glittering sand, and winding up the face of a bare, hot hill. But Nature, placing

it where she has, was for once flattering Art by imitation. For this desolate path leads up to the top of the hill. And there the splendid scene, in glorious contrast to its vile approach, bursts upon you—an unrivalled view of the Snows. From east to west, as far as the sky-line reaches, the white range stretches huge peak by peak, with an awful symmetry of shape, mighty battlements that guard the approaches to a land of fable. And between you and the snows the whole interval is filled with mountain tops, these nearest covered with a splendid vegetation, those farther melting into strange phantasms of pine and mist, phantom trees growing out of blue and purple clouds. Do you remember Satan's transport when, after the tedious passage of Chaos he, for the first time, caught sight of the Paradise-abode of man?

From the hill crest to the dâk bungalow the road lies through beautiful wooded paths, the trees meeting overhead for a mile together, all tapestried with moss and carpeted with ferns. The dâk bungalow had before it two young deodars, large enough to sit under all day long, with a certainty of deep shade, and here I added to those papers published in "In my Indian Garden," and called "Under the Trees," another for "Under the Deodars."

UNDER THE DEODARS.—The Greeks called their pines "wind-haunted"—what epithet would they, then, have found for the deodars? Just as sea-shells hold for ever

and for aye the sound of the waves, and "remembering their august abodes" murmur still of the places they have left—so the deodars. They let go no sound of zephyr or of storm that has once passed them by. Though the air be so still that the tiny down plucked from her breast by the preening dove falls straight to the ground, yet the deodars are wind blown. There is not breeze enough to float the semul's silk, yet the deodars are rehearsing a storm! And they set their music to every tune of the spheres. True song-smiths—they have caught the rhythm that runs through Nature. A thousand tunes with only one set of words among them all, from the stately tropes of the hills, the grand antiphony of sunshine and shade, to the lilting of two minnesingers among the oaks or the tinkling of two blue-bells down below there in the valley.¹

Listen to the deodars now, and you may hear as many woodland sounds as ever beset young Anodos with horrors and delights, the multitudinous voice of Nature. Now, it is the sound of water: the headlong rush of a great river—Gunga falling on to the shoulders of the god. And in the same minute, the same river flowing steadily along between bulrush beds, full fed and whispering its content as it goes. Listen again! A rivulet is tumbling down to the Kosi; but even while you listen the splash and bubble die away, and among the deodars you hear only the steady patter of a phantom rain. Wonderful

¹ I have been reading Emerson.—P. R.

minstrels truly ! that in one hour can play you through the landscapes of this world, from the deep-voiced sea to the wind-swept heath, from murmuring woods to sighing river sides !

And sitting here, what a stream of curious life flows by along the Almorah road. Were there ever such family parties and such impossible babies ? They sleep anywhere. A basket filled with brass pots would not recommend itself to a baby elsewhere as a bed, but there goes one, fast asleep on a cluster of lotahs—and on the back of a tattoo, too, and going fast down hill ! And the mothers ! No wonder these hill-women lose so soon the graces of their youth. Dragging a goat up hill by its ears—I never understood before why goats' ears were created so long and so soft—is of itself no trifling duty throughout a day's march, but with a baby clinging, like a limpet, on one hip and the arm that encircles it balancing also a basket full of chattels on the head, it must be enough to age a Titan. The head of the family, a stalwart mountaineer, meanwhile leads the tattoo, and requires a staff in his right hand to help him to do even that. A mere scrap of a girl-child comes behind in charge of five tattoos—a heavy charge for such a fragment, it seems. But the infant has a system of her own, for whenever she comes up with the last tattoo, she lets the great staff which she carries fall with a crack on its fetlock, and the tattoo ambles ahead forthwith. And when she meets another drove,

she scrambles a few feet up the hill and leaves her animals to make their own arrangements with the aliens. The system is simple enough, and saves her a world of worry. And such dogs! The very shadows and adumbrations of the pariah of the plains. I threw a potted-meat tin—"potted shrimps"—to one of them. The thing smelt savoury, indeed it seemed to the poor beast a glimpse of another world. And the glimpse was enough to set it a-thinking—a-thinking what a superior kind of dog it might have been, under a happier star. And the desolate present overwhelmed it, and it lifted up its voice and whimpered over the tin. You know of course why dogs howl at music? It is because music can speak to brutes, and at the divine sound the dog, snatching as it were a peep through a door ajar of a world of beauties which it can faintly comprehend but may not compass, falls to lamenting. And so my dog with the tin. There was enough of a carnal aroma about the tin to make the thing a joy and gladness to the dog, but there was, over and above the meaty fragrance, a something, divine yet dreadful, that filled the animal with apprehension. He did not in this disguised form recognize—how should he?—the flavour of the harmless crustacean. He had never heard, poor beast, of a shrimp. But he leaped to his conclusion that the thing was of infernal origin, some wile of the evil one, too beautiful to be resigned, yet too dread for dalliance. Unable to tear himself away, he dared not taste. His nose was

in conflict with all his other senses. And so, with ears cocked straight at it, and eyes starting towards it, as you may remember having seen a terrier on guard over a hedgehog, the agitated dog sate by the tin, whimpering ever and again, as the thought came over him of what delights there must be somewhere in the world for other dogs, but not, alas ! for him.

It has been said that "the power of inference differentiates man from the lower animals." I do not know who said it first, but I have it against Emerson that he quotes it ; but whoever originated it, was at fault. For man is not differentiated from animals in that he can draw inferences. Inference is the secret of all that suspicion upon which hinge their ethics, morals, and politics, the one weapon that gives them a chance in the struggle of existence, the birthright of every beast and fowl, and through life the one method of his argument, the one principle of his action. Without the gift of instant and constant inference among animals, man would inhabit the world alone.

But the deodars. While I have been writing, the train of travellers has curled round the hill, and the road is desolate. Only a hen left, to look at all this landscape ! And yet if you mark it, "the tame villatic fowl" yonder, has an unwonted bravery of gait. A small thing will puff up a hen. It happened thus :— On arriving, we had found in our provision-basket half a loaf, too stale to eat, and had thrown it out. Straightway the sparrows fore-

gathered and making the loaf their "commissariat go-down," began providently each to secret its morsel. Upon the rout there suddenly stepped round the corner a fowl—this fowl—and making a great show of caution, as if the enterprise were one of some hardihood, made prey at the beak's point, of the entire half-loaf. With the same affectation of strategy she walked off with it down the road. She has just finished it, and is now parading her filled stomach on the high road, as one who has dined might carry his white waistcoat out into the street before his tavern. And just as the hungry ones have a delightful revenge of him when a passing cart splashes his waistcoat, so I, waiting here for luncheon, delight in the hen's discomfiture. She was swaggering along the path, when a sound above her attracted her attention. Her hearing was perhaps thickened by the recent meal, and lightly satisfied, she paced on, planting her feet as precisely as if there had been some reason for choosing each spot she trod on. Again the noise! She looked up. It was only a kid browsing on the bank above. "Only one of those kids," she said, quite out loud, so that I could hear her, and resumed her stately progress. Alas for pride! The next minute a pebble, displaced by the kid, came trundling down the bank, ("only that kid," said she,) and phud! fell plump on the middle of her back! On the instant her pride collapsed: self-respect even was flung aside: precipitate terror supervened. A flurry of feathers in a little cloud

of dust came clackering up the path, and for the rest of the day that fowl walked as if the whole world was in ambush. History records little to the credit of the hen. Poets avoid her, even Wordsworth, and Cowper, having once referred to "the domestic tribe," says nothing more of her. Milton damns her with a passing notice, and Keats, the great bard of the birds, never mentions the humble wife of chanticleer. Why, the Egyptians did not even worship the hen! and they went, as the gods know, low enough for things to worship. The cock, on the contrary, has his glories of the past and present. Minerva and Æsculapius contended for the honour of honouring him. Cowper calls him "the noblest of the feathered kind," and (though I do not agree with Scott as to his note being "a blithe carol") I agree in the main with the praises this bird has garnered.

Under the deodars nothing grows. I suppose all the things want to see the beautiful trees and so, just as you do, to have a look at a tall thing, they step back a little way. Just outside the circle of the tree a crowd of blue flowers, as pretty as the English speedwell, stare all day with their round blue eyes at the shapely trees. And in every one of them you may pick, you will find nestled round the centre a colony of tiny beetles. And yet we speak of "*little*" flowers, forgetting that each of them is a parish, and to things of a smaller size compasses Trismegistus' circle. And when we further remark that each of those beetles that nestles round the centre of

the speedwell blossom is itself a park and pasture for herds of parasites, how misappropriate "little" becomes! By whose rules shall size be judged? The Aztecs builded cities, but a cat would have been a terror to an Aztec. The pigmies that once lived along the Ganges had many a stiff bout with the partridges. Their standard of size does not satisfy us, nor would ours satisfy the Anakim.

But it is time to go in, for—

" From the neighbouring vale
The cuckoo straggling up to the hill tops
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place,"

and the sun has dipped beyond the hill. It is time to put our belongings together and move on.

Our next stage is Peora. But if I die by the way, I hope I shall be buried by the way. It would be selfish to monopolize the deodars, or I would like to be buried here. Do you remember in Phantastes how, "They buried me in no graveyard; *they loved me too much for that*; but they laid me in the grounds of their own castle, amid many trees."





EASTERN SMELLS AND WESTERN NOSES.

IN his essay showing that a certain nation—contrary to the generally applauded notion—"do not stink," Sir Thomas Browne uses with effect the argument that a mixed race cannot have a national smell. Among a mongrel people he contends no odour could be "gentilitious;" yet he nowhere denies the possibility, or even impugns the probability, of a pure people having a popular smell, a scent in which the public should share alike, an aroma as much common property as the National Anthem, a joint-stock fragrance, a commonwealth of odour—a perfume with which no single individual could selfishly withdraw, saying, "This is my own, my proper and peculiar flavour, and no man may cry me halves in it," as Alexander or Mahomed might have done, who, unless history lies, were "divinely" scented. Not that individual odours, as distinct from those of the species, have been uncommon in any times. Many instances may be found, if examples were required, to support "a postulate which has ever found unqualified assent."

"For well I know," cries Don Quixote, "the scent of that lovely rose! and tell me, Sancho, when near her,

thou must have perceived a Sabeian odour, an aromatic fragrance, a something sweet for which I cannot find a name—a scent, a perfume—as if thou wert in the shop of some curious glover.”

“All I can say is,” quoth Sancho, “that I perceived somewhat of a strong smell.”

It would, however, be pure knavery to argue from the particular fragrance of Don Quixote’s lady that all the dames of La Mancha could appeal to the affections through the nose. Equally dishonest would it be to disperse Alexander’s scent over all Macedon, or with a high hand conclude that all Romans were “as unsavoury as Bassa.” On the other hand, to argue, from the existence of a scentless individual, the innocence of his brethren, is to suppose that all violets are dog-violets, or that the presence of a snowdrop deodorizes the guilty garlic : whereas, in fact, the existence of such an individual enhances the universal fragrance ; as Kalidasa says, “one speck of black shows more gloriously bright the skin of Siva’s bull.” If a number of units produce an aroma, it will be hard to believe that each is individually inodorous, in which argument from probabilities I have to a certain degree the countenance of the Pundits in their maxim of the Stick and the Cake. What is more to the point, we have on the globe at least one fragrant people, for (leaving Greenlanders out of the question) no one denies that Africans are aromatic. This is no novel suggestion, but an old antiquity ; it is “a point of high

prescription, and a fact universally smelt out. If, therefore, one nation can indisputably claim a general odour, it is possible another may ; and much may be found to support any one who will say that in this direction "warm India's suppled-bodied sons" may claim equality of natural adornment with "the musky daughter of the Nile." If it were not for the blubber-feeding Greenlanders, I might contend that "it is all the fault of that confounded sun," for heat expresses odour elsewhere than in Asia and Africa, and I can keep within "Trismegistus his circle" and "need not to pitch beyond ubiquity" when I cite Pandemonium as an instance of unity of smell in a large population. We read in Byron's "Vision of Judgment" that at the sound of Pye's heroics the whole assembly sprang off with a melodious twang and a variety of scents, some sulphureous, some ambrosial ; and that the sulphureous individuals all fled one way gibbering to their own dominions, that odorous Principality of the Damned whither in old times the handsome minstrel went in quest of his wife. That the infernal fraternity is uni-odorous we know, on the authority of the immortal Manchegan Squire, who says : "This devil is as plump as a partridge, and has another property very different from what you devils are wont to have, for it is said they all smell of brimstone," that is, like the Vienna matches *ohne phosphor-geruch*—that Wendell Holmes hates so honestly.

To return to India ; it is very certain that a single

Hindoo is not always perceptibly fragrant, yet it is equally certain that if, when a dozen are together, an average be struck, each individual of the party must be credited with a considerable amount. In any gathering of Orientals the Western stranger is instantly aware of a circumambient aroma ; he becomes conscious of a new and powerful perfume ; a curious *je ne sais quoi* scent which may, possibly, like attar of roses, require only endless dilution and an acquired taste to become pleasant, but which certainly requires dilution for the novice. No particular person or member of the public seems to be odorous beyond his fellows, but put three together, and they might be 300. Perhaps this is produced by sympathy, by some magnetic relation between like and like, the result of natural affinities. It may be that each Hindoo is flint to the other's steel, and that more than one is requisite for the combustion of the aromatic particles ; and that, as evening draws the perfume from flowers, and excitement the "bouquet" from a musk-rat, contiguity and congregation are required for the proper expression of the fragrance of Orientals. Cases of individuals innocent of all savour carry therefore no weight, unless to those who believe that all asses can speak because Balaam's quadruped was casually gifted with articulate utterance, or that fish as a rule possess stentorian lungs because Mr. Briggs once caught a pike that barked.

A notable point about this Eastern savour is that though it approaches many others, it exactly resembles none.

Like Elia's burnt pig, it doesn't smell of burnt cottage, nor yet of any known herb, weed, or flower. Though unique, its entity is intertwined with a host of phantom entities, as a face seen in a passing train, instantly recognized but never brought home to any one person from its partial resemblance to a hundred ; and they say that no number of qualified truths can ever make up an absolute verity. By smelling a musk-rat through a bunch of garlic an idea of it may be arrived at, but hardly more ; for the conflicting odours hamper the judgment by distracting the nostrils, keeping it hovering in acute uncertainty between the components without allowing it to settle on the aggregate—"so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosial result or common substance." This seems to be affected not by an actual confusion of matters, but by parallel existence ; rather by the nice exactitude of balance than mutual absorption ; not so much by a mingled unity, as from our impotence to unravel the main threads, to single out any one streak of colour. It is like a nobody's child, a Ginx's baby, with a whole parish for parents ; or one of those puddings which at every mouthful might be sworn to change its taste, and which when finished leaves one indelible but impalpable fragrance on the memory of the palate, that may be called up by every passing odour, but is never, in its composite singularity again encountered. It is a Lost Chord.

In the West no such community of fragrance obtains, and the great Science of Perfume, though exquisitely perfected in certain details, does not command as in the East the attention of the masses. With us it is the exception to use "scent," but with them the singular person is the scentless one. The nose nevertheless plays an important part even in Europe, and it is well therefore that this feature has at last found one courageous apostle.

Dr Jäger, a Professor of Stuttgart, has, after most patient experiments with his own nose, proved it to be the seat of his soul. Simply with the nose on his face the learned Professor is enabled, eyes shut and ears stopped, to discriminate the character of any stranger he may meet, or even that he has passed in the street. He can, then, by merely putting his nose to the key-hole, tell what the people on the other side of the door are doing ; and, more than this, what they have just been doing, can assure himself whether they are young or old, married or single, and whether they are happy or the reverse. Proceeding upon the knowledge thus acquired by a process which we may call successful diagnosis, the Professor argues, in a lecture which he has given to the world on this fascinating subject, that if different scents express different traits of character, each trait in turn can be separately affected by a particular scent, and his experiments, he gravely assures us, prove him here as right as before. For not only can Dr. Jäger smell, for instance, bad temper, or a tendency to procrastination, in any

individual, but by emitting the counteracting antidote odour, he can smooth the frown into a smile, and electrify the sluggard into despatch. Yet Dr. Jäger does not claim to possess within himself, his own actual body, more perfumes than any of his neighbours. He does not arrogate to himself any special odours, as did Mo-hamet and Alexander the Great, or ask to divide honours with the civet-cat or musk-deer. There is no insolent assumption of this kind about the Professor, no unnatural straining after the possession of extraordinary attributes. He merely claims to have discovered by chemical research certain preparations which, when volatilized, produce certain results upon the nostrils. There is no o'er-vaulting ambition in this. The merest tyro can compass as much with a very few ingredients; and, as a matter of fact, any boy of average, or even the meanest, capacity can, by a courageous combination of the contents of his chemical chest, produce such effluvia as shall at once, and violently, affect the nostrils of the whole household, not excluding the girl in the scullery or the cat on the nursery hearthrug. But the boy's results are miscellaneous and fortuitous. He blunders upon a smell of extraordinary volume and force by, it may be, the merest accident, and quite unintentionally, therefore, lets loose upon himself the collective wrath of his family circle. Dr. Jäger, however, has brought the whole gamut of smells under his own control; and so, by letting out from his pocket any one he chooses, he can at once dissolve an

assembly in tears or make every face in it ripple with smiles. The great secret of composition once attained, care in uncorking is all that is demanded, and the Professor, with his pocket full of little bootles, can move about unsuspected among his kind ; and, by his judicious emission of various smells as he goes along, can tranquillize a frantic mob, or set the passing funeral giggling, or a punch-and-judy audience sobbing.

Hitherto the nose has been held, as compared with the other organs of sense, in very slight account indeed. It has always been looked upon as the shabby feature of the face, and, in public society, has been spoken of with an apology for mentioning it. Many attempts have been made to render it respectable, but the best-intentioned efforts of philosophers have been thwarted by the extremes to which their theories have been pushed by the longer-nosed individuals of the public. The nose may be really an index of character, but the amount of nose does not necessarily imply, as some people contend, a corresponding pre-eminence of genius or virtue. Many great and good men have had quite indifferent noses, while the length of the proboscis of more than one hero of the Chamber of Horrors is remarkable. The feeling against this feature has, therefore, been irritated rather than soothed by the well-meant efforts of theorists. When the urchin, innocent of art, wishes, with his simple chalk, to caricature the householder upon his gate-post or garden-door, he finds in the nose the most suitable

object for his unskilled derision. Grown up, the same urchin, exasperated with his neighbour, seizes him by the nose. This ill-feeling against the feature admits of little explanation, for it seems altogether unreasonable and deplorable. It is true that the nose takes up a commanding position on the face, and does not altogether fulfil the expectations naturally formed of so prominent a member. Vagrant specks of soot settle upon it and make it ridiculous. An east wind covers the nose with absurdity. It is a fierce light that beats upon a throne, and the nose, before assuming a central place, should perhaps, remarking the fact, have been better prepared to maintain its own dignity. But beyond this, impartial criticism cannot blame the feature. On the other hand, much can be said in its favour, and if Dr. Jäger is right, a great future lies before the nose. Lest it should be thought I exaggerate the importance of Dr. Jäger's discoveries, I give the learned Professor's own words. "Puzzled as to the meaning of the word 'soul'" says he, "I set myself to inquire, and my researches have assured me that the seat of the immortal part of man is in his nose. All the mind affections are relative to the nasal sensations. I have found this out by observing the habits of animals in the menagerie, and finding how exquisite was their sense of smell, I conceived my great idea, and experiment has proved me right. So perfect can the perceptions by the nose become that I can discover even the mental conditions of those around me by smelling

them, and, more than this, I can, by going into a room, tell at once by sniffing whether those who were last in it were sad or mirthful. Aroma, is in fact, the essence of the soul, and every flavour emitted by the body represents a corresponding emotion of the soul. Happiness finds expression in a mirthful perfume, sorrow in a doleful one. Does not a hungry man on smelling a joint of meat at once rejoice? I myself have been so overcome by the scent of a favourite fruit that, under an uncontrollable impulse, I have fallen upon them and devoured the whole plateful! so powerful is the sense of smell." To present the different perfumes accurately and easily to the eye, the Professor, when first delivering his lecture, drew upon a black-board a number of diagrams showing the various curves taken by the scent atoms when striking upon the soul-nerves, and explained briefly certain instruments he had constructed for registering the wave motion of smells, and the relative force with which they impinged upon the nose of his soul or the soul of his nose. The audience meanwhile had become restless and agitated, and the Professor therefore hurried on to the second section of his discoveries—those for counteracting the passions detected by the nose. "I have here," he said, "a smell-murdering essence, which I have discovered and christened Ozogene, and with which I can soothe the angry man to mildness or infuriate a quaker." But the audience, such is the bigoted antipathy to the exaltation of the nose, would not stand this on any

account, and the Professor, in obedience to the clamour, had to resume his seat.

Dr. Jäger did not, therefore, secure a patient hearing, but he should remember how at all times the first apostles of truth have been received, and live content to know that posterity will gravely honour his memory, though contemporary man makes fun of his discoveries. Indeed, posterity will have good cause to honour the great man who shall thus have banished from among them strife and anger. The Riot Act will never have to be read to an excited populace, since a squirt of perfume will suffice to allay their fury. The comic lecturer or charity-sermon preacher may assure themselves of the sympathy of their audiences, quite apart from the matter of their discourse. Science will have new fields opened to it, and humanity take a new lease of its pleasures. The nose, hitherto held of little more account than the chin, will supersede all the other features, and, like Cinderella, rise from the kitchen ashes to palace dignities, developing under the Darwinian theory, into proboscidian dimensions of extraordinary acuteness. The policeman will need no evidence but that of his nose to detect the thief, actual or potential, and the judge, unhampered by jury, counsel, or witnesses, will summarily dispense a nasal justice. Diplomacy will be purged of its obscurities, and statesmen live in a perpetual Palace of Truth. Conscious of each other's detective organs, men will speak of their fellows honestly, and hypocrisy will

cease from society. How will war or crime be able to thrive when the first symptom of ill-temper in a Sovereign or of ambition in a Minister can be quenched at the will of any individual ratepayer? And thus a universal peace will settle upon a sniffing world.





GAMINS.

ANTHROPOLOGY no doubt is a great science, but still it is merely an infant—a monster baby, I confess, but scarcely past the age at which Charles Lamb liked sucking-pigs and chimney-sweeps. Toddles and Poddles, as readers of Dickens will remember, used to go on buccaneering expeditions, but they were only across the kitchen-floor, and often ended in the fireplace. Anthropology in the same way makes only short excursions, and these even are not always marked by judgment in direction. At any rate, there can be no doubt that anthropology has not as yet paid any consideration to the great co-ordinate science of “lollipopology” of which one sub-section concerns itself with the phenomena of “gamins.”

This subject has perhaps been touched upon in ephemeral literature, but it was a mere flirtation, a flippant butterfly kind of settling. The intentions were not matrimonial; there was no talk of taking the house on a lease. And yet the subject of gamin distribution is worthy investigation. Why are there no gamins in India, with their street affronts and trivial triumphs? Pariah

dogs are scarcely an equivalent for these unkempt morsels of barbarism, these little Ishmaels of our cities. What is the reason, then, for their absence? Can it be too hot to turn three wheels a penny? Surely not; for dust is a bad conductor of heat, and what gamin is there—pure-minded, a gamin *nomine dignus*—that would not rather turn thirty somersaults in a dust-bin than three on a pavement? Why, my “compound”¹ alone would tempt to an eternity of tumbling. And yet no Hindoo of my acquaintance has even offered to stand on his head! Can it be that there is no ready means of causing annoyance? What! Is there not that same dust? Would not any gamin, unless lost to all sense of emulation and self-respect, rejoice in kicking up dust if he saw the remotest glimpse of even the chance of molesting anybody? Again, why do not little Hindoos throw stones about? Because there is nothing to throw at? Hah! Put one vulture down in Islington, and mark the instant result. Nothing to throw at? Mehercule! Any member of a large family will remember the tumultuous uprising and stair-shaking exit of the junior olive-twigs if even a wagtail came into the garden. A cat on the lawn was convulsions. Imagine, then, those same impetuous juniors surrounded by blue jays, bee-eaters, and grey squirrels! And yet the young Hindoo sees an easy mark for any of the stones lying at his feet, and passes on.

¹ A word of vexed derivation, but meaning in India (and Batavia, I believe) the precincts of a dwelling-house; “premises” in fact. —P. R.

Perhaps it is something in the shape of the stones? The argument is plausible, for Indian stones, it is true, are of hideous shapes, angular and unprovocative. The fingers do not itch to throw them. But European gamins will throw brick in scraggy and uncompromising sections, *rebarbatif* and volcanic in appearance, at, when other targets fail, a kerbstone. A London gamin would heave his grandmother, if he could, at a mongoose. Are Hindoos forbidden to throw stones? Perhaps they may be, but imagine forbidding a gamin to throw stones or forbidding a gamin to do anything! When England sells Gibraltar, it will be time to think of that; or when, as Wendell Holmes says, strawberries grow bigger *downward* through the basket. It is evident, then, that none of these are the right reasons, so it only remains to conclude that Hindoos were not "designed" in the beginning for gamins. Boys, they say, are the natural enemies of creation, but Young India contradicts this flat. "Boys will be boys" has stood most of us in good stead when brought red-handed before the tribune; yet young India needs no excusings for mischief. He never does any. He has all the virtues of his elders, and none of their vices, for he positively prefers to behave properly.

Perhaps as a last resource the absence of gamins in India might be accepted as a key to the theory of climates, for we know that Nature never wastes. Nature is pre-eminently economical. What, then, would have

been the use of giving Bengal ice and snow, since there are no gamins to throw it about, or to make slides on pavements ?

In England the small boy begins to throw stones as soon as he can crawl to one, and continues to do so until he takes to gloves, or is taken up by the police; and there are tolerable reasons why he should thus indulge himself. Take, for instance, the case of a passing train. The boys see the train coming, and a lively interest is at once aroused in its approach; the best places on the bridge are scrambled for, and the smaller children, who cannot climb up for themselves, are hoisted on to the parapet and balanced across it on their stomachs "to see the train pass." As it comes puffing and steaming up, the interest rises into excitement, and then, as the engine plunges under the bridge, boils over in enthusiasm. How are they to express this emotion in the few seconds at their disposal? They must be very quick, for the carriages are slipping rapidly past one after the other. It is of no use shouting, for the train makes more noise than they, and they, unfortunately, have no handkerchiefs to wave. But the crisis is acute, and something has to be done, and that promptly. There is no time to waste in reflection, or the train will be gone, and the sudden solitude that will follow will be embittered to them by the consciousness of golden opportunities lost for ever. They wave their arms like wild semaphores, scream inarticulately, and dance up

and down, but all this is manifestly inadequate. It does not rise to the occasion, and they feel that it does not. The moment of tumult, with the bridge shaking under them, the dense white steam-clouds rushing up at them, and the roar of the train in their ears, demands a higher expression of their homage, a more glorious tribute from their energy. Looking round in despair, they see some stones. To grab them up in handfuls is the work of an instant, and in the next the missiles are on their way. After all, the moment had been almost lost, for the guard's van was just emerging from under the bridge, as the pebbles came hurtling along after the speeding train ; but the youngsters rejoice, and go home gladdened that they did not throw in vain, for the guard, hearing the pattering upon the roof, looked out to see what was the matter and shook his fist at them, and the boys feel that they have done their best to celebrate the event, that their sacrifice has been accepted, and that they have not lived and loved in vain. For it is, undoubtedly, a sacrifice that they offer ; a sacrifice to emotions highly wrought, to an ecstasy of enthusiasm suddenly overwhelming them and as suddenly departing, to the majesty of the train and its tumultuous passage.

Boys do not, it will be noticed, throw stones at passing wheelbarrows or at perambulators, or even at cabs. Neither the one nor the other excites sufficiently. They belong more to their own sphere and their own level in life, are viewed subjectively, and seem too commonplace

for extraordinary attentions. The train and the steam-boat, however, are abstract ideas, absorbing the human beings they carry into their own gigantic entity, so far removed from the boys' own lives that they do not fall within the pale of ordinary ethics, and have to be viewed from a higher objective platform. Besides, the driver and guards of the train, being in a hurry, have no time to get down and catch the pelters, and therefore it is safe to pelt—so the boys think.

Whether magistrates have ever studied, or should study, the matter from any other than a police-court point of view I should hesitate to affirm. But in the ordinary cases where lads fling pebbles at a steam-boat or train, their parents are fined, with the option of the culprits going to prison, and as the parents no doubt always give the urchins their full money's-worth in retribution, justice is probably dealt out all round fairly enough. The boys, it generally appears, hit "an elderly passenger" with one of the stones which they throw, and there matters culminate, as the original act of stone-throwing, had the missiles struck no one, might have passed by as a surviving remnant of some old pagan ceremony.

Indeed, from the very first, the youngsters have had bad examples before them ; and if in such matters we are to go back to the original offenders, we must confess that Deucalion and his wife have much to answer for. Their descendants have been throwing stones ever since ;

and, whether in fun or in earnest, in the execution of criminal sentences or the performance of religious rites, men have never given over pelting each other. Whatever part of the world we go into, we find it is the same; for in the wilds of America the Red Indian shies flints at his spirit stones; all over Europe the devil is exorcised with stones; and in Asia, whether it is the Arab pelting the Evil One from the sacred precincts of the Holy City or the Hindoo dropping pebbles into the valleys of enchantment, a similar tendency in race prevails.

As an instance of the innocent view taken of the practice by a distinguished Englishman, De Quincey, I would quote the incident of his meeting the king in Windsor Park. De Quincey was then a lad, and, walking with a young friend, was, he tells us, "theorizing and practically commenting on the art of chucking stones. Boys," he continues, "have a peculiar contempt for female attempts in that way. For, besides that girls fling wide of the mark, with a certainty that might have won the applause of Galerius,² there is a peculiar sling and rotary motion of the arm in launching a stone, which no girl ever *can* attain. From ancient practice" (note this) "I was somewhat of a proficient in this art, and was discussing the philosophy of female failures,

² "Sir," said that emperor to a soldier who had missed the target in succession I know not how many times (suppose we say fifteen), "allow me to offer my congratulations on the truly admirable skill you have shown in keeping clear of the mark. Not to have hit once in so many trials, argues the most splendid talents for missing."

illustrating my doctrine with pebbles, as the case happened to demand, when—" he met the king, and the narrative diverges from the subject.

Nor is stone-throwing without some dignity in its traditions, for it has happened probably to many of us ourselves, and it has certainly been a custom from time immemorial, to take augury more or less momentous from this act, and make oracles of our pebbles. Among the many cases of this species of divination on record, none is more notable than that of Rousseau's, where he put the tremendous issues of his future state to the test of stone-throwing. "One day," says he, "I was pondering over the condition of my soul and the chances of future salvation or the reverse, and all the while mechanically, as it were, throwing stones at the trunks of the trees I passed, and with all my customary dexterity, —or in other words never hitting one of them. All of a sudden the idea flashed into my mind that I would take an augury, and thus, if possible, relieve my mental anxiety. I said to myself, I will throw this stone at that tree opposite. If I hit it, I am to be saved; if I miss it, I am to be damned eternally!" And he threw the stone, and hit it plumb in the middle,—"*ce qui véritablement n'était pas difficile; car j'avais eu soin de choisir un arbre fort gros et fort près.*"

It is very possible, moreover, that the English boy throws stones from hereditary instinct; that he bombards the passing locomotives even as in primeval forests the

ancestral ape "shelled" with the cocoanuts of his native forests the passing herds of bison. It would therefore be rash, without research into the lore of stone-throwing, and a better knowledge of the Stone Age, to say that the urchin who takes a "cockshy" at a steamboat does so purely from criminal instinct; for it is repeatedly in evidence that he takes no aim with his missile at all, but simply launches it into space, and, generous and trustful as childhood always is, casts his pebbles upon the waters in hopes of pleasant though fortuitous results.

Again, as I have already said, there is often no malicious motive. To pelt the loquacious frog is, in my opinion, a cruel act, but the criminality lessens, at least to my thinking, if the same stone be thrown at a hippopotamus. Similarly, we might recognize a difference between flinging half a brick at an individual stranger and throwing it at a mass-meeting or at a nation, or at All the Russias; while, if a boy threw stones at the Channel Squadron, he would be simply absurd, and his criminality would cease altogether. Where, then, should the line be drawn? The boy would rather pelt an ironclad than a penny steamboat, for it is a larger and nobler object to aim at; but, though he could do H.M.S. *Devastation* no harm, the police could hardly be expected to overlook his conduct. Stone-throwing has therefore come to be considered wrong in itself, just as the other day a wretched old bear found dancing for

hire in the streets was astonished to learn from the police magistrate that bears are not permitted to dance in England. What his hind legs were given him for the quadruped will now be puzzled to guess, and in the same way the boy, finding he must not throw them, will wonder what stones were made for.

A very small cause, indeed, may have immense effects ; and this holds good with national character as well as with natural phenomena. A little stone set rolling from the top of the Andes might spread ruin far and wide through the valleys at their feet, and the accident of Esau being a good marksman has left the Arabs wanderers and desert folk to the present day. The English character has itself been formed by an aggregation of small causes working together, and it will perhaps be found that one of the most important of them was the abundance of stones that lie about the surface of the ground in England. In India the traveller may go a thousand miles in a straight line, and except where he crosses rivers, will not find anything on the ground which he can pick up and throw. The Bengali, therefore, cannot throw, and never could, for he has never had anything to practise with ; and what is his character ? Is he not notoriously "gentle" and soft-mannered ? His dogs are still wild beasts, and his wild birds are tame. What can explain this better than the absence of stones ? We in England have always had plenty of stones, and where the fists could not settle quarrels our rude ancestors had only to stoop to the

ground for arms ; and it is a mere platitude to say that the constant provision of arms makes a people ready to pick a quarrel and encourages independence in bearing. From the same cause our dogs obey our voices, for the next argument they know will be a stone ; while, as for our wild birds, let the schoolboys tell us whether they understand the use of pebbles or not. In Greece the argument of the *chermadion* is still a favourite, for the savage dogs are still there that will recognize no other, unmindful of that disastrous episode in the history of Mycenæ, which all arose from Hercules' young cousin throwing a paving stone at a baying hound. These same boys of ours, therefore, have this argument also in their favour, that they are obeying an hereditary instinct, and developing the original plan of Nature, when they throw stones.

I doubt if the police will attend to this. It is better, perhaps, they should not, or, at any rate, that they should whip the boys first and discuss the instinct afterwards. A reformatory, except at Stoney Stratford, for such offenders would not, so to speak, be out of place, and a penitentiary at Stonehenge would be delightfully apposite, for the urchins could not throw it about, however much they might pine to do so. If exile be not thought too harsh for such delinquents, punishment might be pleasantly blended with consideration, if our stone-throwing youth were banished to Arabia Petræa. We would not go so far as to recommend stoning the urchins, for the ceremony which goes by that name was not the promis-

cuous casting of stones at a criminal, as is generally supposed. The guilty person, so the Talmud enacts, was taken to the top of an eminence of fifteen feet, and violently pushed over the edge. The fall generally broke his back, but if the executioners, on looking over, found their victim was not dead, they fetched one large stone and dropped it down from the same eminence upon the body. Such a punishment as this would not be suitable for the modern offence of pelting trains and steamboats. Nevertheless, severity is called for; as, in spite of the hereditary and legendary precedent which the gamin of the period has for his pastimes, he cannot, even as the representative of the primeval ape, be permitted to indulge his enthusiasm at the sight of the triumphs of science in a manner that endangers "the elderly passenger."





OF TAILORS.

THAT superstition is hateful, merely because it is superstition, is an inhuman doctrine. Yorick was superstitious, and so was Martin Luther. That a man should hesitate to shoot a raven lest he kill King Arthur unawares, can scarcely be held a criminal cunctation. Was ever man more superstitious than the silly knight of La Mancha, the sweet gentleman who loved too well? but did ever the man soil earth who hated Don Quixote? Cervantes, when he limned him, might laugh away the chivalry of Spain; but he did not, nor did he wish to, draw a knave. And yet in nothing do we find more to hate, with the honest hatred of an Esau, than in this same superstition. Heaven-born, it has bred with monster fiends. True superstition is reverent, and from it, like orchids from an old tree-trunk, spring blossoms of rare beauty. But as the same tree feeds noisome fungi, the vampire epiphyte and slab lichens, so from the grand old trunk of superstition has sprung out a growth of unwholesome fictions. What miscreant first said that a tailor was the ninth part, and no more, of a man? By what vile arithmetic did the author of the old play arrive at his equation of tailors to

men when he makes his hero, on meeting eighteen of them, call out, "Come on, hang it, I'll fight *you both*!" Why a ninth, and why a tailor?

The tailor is the victim of misconstruction. Remember George Eliot's story of a man so snuffy that the cat happening to pass near him was seized with such a violent sternutation as to be cruelly misunderstood! Let Baboo Ishuree Dass say, "Tailors, they are very dishonest;" he is speaking of *natives*. Let Burton say, "The tailor is a thief;" he was fanciful. And let Urquiza of Païta be detested, he was only a half-bred Peruvian. Remember the regiment of London tailors; De Quincy's brave journeyman tailor; M. Achille Jules Cesar Le Grand, who was so courteous to Marguerite in the *Morals of May Fair*; the tailor of Yarrow who beat Mr. Tickler at backgammon; the famous tailor who killed seven at one blow and lived to divide a kingdom and to call a queen his stepmother. Read "Mouat's Quinquennial Report of the Lower Provinces," and learn that the number of tailors in prison was less by one-half than that of the priests. They were, moreover, the only class that had the decency to be incarcerated in round numbers, thereby notably facilitating the taking of averages and the deduction of most valuable observations.

Tailors, the ninth part of a man! Then are all *Æthiops* "harmless"? Can no Cretan speak a true word, or a Boeotian a wise one? Are all Italians "blaspheming," and is Egypt "merry" Egypt? Nature, and

she is no fool, has thought good to reproduce the tailor type in bird and insect: then why does man condemn the tailor? Because he sits cross-legged? Then is there not a whole man in Persia. Why should our children be taught in the nursery rhyme, how "nine-and-twenty tailors went out to kill a snail, but not a single one of them dared to touch his tail"? Or why should the world exult over the tailor, whom the elephant, as we learn from Mrs. Gurton's "Book of Anecdotes," squirted with ditch-water? We know the elephant to have been the aggressor; but just as we rejoice with Punch over the murder of his wife, and the affront he offers to the devil, so we applaud the ill-mannered pachyderm. "The elephant," we read in childhood, "put his trunk into a tailor's shop," thrust his nose, some four feet of it, into a tailor's house, his castle, writing himself down a gross fellow and an impertinent. For the tailor to have said "Take your nose out of my shop" would have been tame, and on a mammal ill-conditioned enough to go where he was not bidden, such temperance would have been thrown away. When the Goth pulled the beard of the Senator, the Roman struck him down. Did Jupiter argue with Ixion, or Mark bandy words with the lover of Isolt? The tailor did not waste his breath, but we read "pricked the elephant's nose with a needle." Here the story should end. Jove's eagles have met at Delos. But no. "The elephant," we are told, "retired to a puddle and filled his trunk with water, and, returning to the shop,

squirited it over the tailor." It was sagacious, doubtless, to squirt water at the tailor, and to squirt it straight ; but such sagacity is no virtue, or the Artful Dodger must be held to be virtuous. The triumph of the elephant was one of Punch's triumphs—Punch, who beats his wife past recovery, hangs an intimate friend after stealing his dog, and trifles with the devil. Punch the incorrigible homunculus who, fresh from murder (his infant being thrown out of window), and with the smell of the brimstone of Diabolus still clinging to his frilled coat, complacently drums his heels upon the stage and assures his friends in front that he has put his enemies to flight. *Root-a-too-it ! Root-a-too-it !* It is a great villain ; yet the audience roar their fat applause. So with the elephant. Yet Mrs. Gurton has handed him down to future childhood as a marvel of sagacity, to be compared only with that pig who tells the time of day on playing-cards ; the cat in Wellingtons who made his master Marquis of Carabbas, and rose himself to high honours ; and that ingenious but somewhat severe old lady who laboured under the double disadvantage of small lodgings and a large family. Of all these Mrs. Gurton, in her able work, preserves the worthy memories ; but that episode of the high-handed elephant and the seemly tailor should have been forgotten—irrecoverably lost like the hundred and odd volumes of Livy, or Tabitha Bramble's reticule in the River Avon. But the blame of perpetuation rests not with Mrs. Gurton, but with her posterity. They admired the work

and reprinted it, not like Anthon's classics, expurgated, but in its noisome entirety. The volume before me is now a score years old—one year younger than was Ulysses' dog, and two years older than Chatterton; so perhaps it may not be reproduced in our generation, and the mischievous fable may die out before the growth of better reading as the scent of a musk-rat killed overnight fades away before the fumes of breakfast. Then let us hope, the Tailor—the only story which reflects contempt on him being abolished—will assume his proper position between the Angels and the anthropomorphous Apes.





THE HARA-KIRI.

THE Hara-Kiri is a universal custom, for there is no passion in the mind of man so weak but it masters the fear of death. So said Lord Bacon ; and he illustrates his text, as also does Burton, in his "Anatomy," with many notable examples of revenge triumphing over death, love slighting it, honour aspiring to it, grief flying to it, fear ignoring it, and even pity, the "tenderest of affections," provoking to it. When Otho the Emperor committed suicide, many, out of sheer compassion that such a sovereign should have renounced life, killed themselves. Indeed it requires no strong passion to take the terrors out of death, for we know how frequently suicides have left behind them, as the only reason for their act, that they were "tired of life," weary, perhaps, of an existence monotonous with poverty or sickness, or even simply borne down by the mere tedious repetition of uneventful days. In spite, however, of the multitude of examples which past history and the records of our own everyday life afford, that death wears for many of all classes and both sexes a by no means fearful aspect, the human mind recoils from the prospect of digging, as it

were, one's own grave, and shudders at the thought of being the executioner of one's own body.

Apologists have, however, been found for suicide, not only in antiquity, but in modern days; some, like Dr. Donne, claiming for the act the same degrees of culpability that the law attaches to homicide, others founding their pleas on the ground that Holy Writ nowhere condemns the crime, and one profanely arguing that his life is a man's own to do with as he will. Goethe may be called an apologist for suicide, and so may all those historians or novelists who make their heroes "die nobly" by their own hands; and De Quincey himself seems to have been at one time inclined to excuse under certain circumstances the act of "spontaneous martyrdom."

Pity at first carries away the feelings of the sympathetic, but there are few healthy minds to which, on the second thought, does not come the reflection that suicide is, after all, an insult to human nature, and, for all its pathos, cowardly. There are, indeed, circumstances, such, for instance, as hideous, incurable disease, that tend to soften the public verdict upon the unhappy wretch who, in taking his own life, had otherwise committed a crime against humanity, and played a traitor's part to all that is most noble in man. But these, as actually resulting in suicide, are very exceptional and infrequent. In most cases life is thrown away impatiently and peevishly, a sudden impulse of remorse or grief nerving the victim to forget how grand life really is, with its

earnest aims and hearty work, and how bright it is with its everyday home affections and its cheerful hopes of better things and better times. Our courts of law generalize such impulses under the term "temporary insanity," and the world accepts the term as a satisfactory one, for it is not human to believe that a sane person would under any circumstances throw up life. Races, our own notably, conspicuous wherever found in the earth for their active, hearty, healthful pursuit of work or pleasure, refuse to believe that any but the mad, whether permanently or for the time only, would wilfully cut short their life's interests, and exchange sunlight and manly labour, all the ups and downs that make men brave and hopeful, for the gloomy ignominy of a premature grave. "Above all," says Lord Bacon, "believe it, the sweetest canticle is 'Nunc Dimittis, when a man hath obtained worthy ends and expectations ;" but death in the prime of life, "Finis" written before half the pages of the book had been turned, must always present itself to the courageous, cheerful mind as the most terrible of catastrophes.

In its most terrible form, the Hara-kiri is of course a Japanese evil ; but suicide, alas ! is not peculiar to any one country or people. In the manner in which they view it, nations differ—the Hindoo, for instance, contemplates it with apathy, the savage of the Congo with pride, the Japanese with a stern sense of a grave duty, the Englishman with horror and pity—but the crime has

its roots in all soils alike, and flourishes under all skies. But that really grand system of legalized self-murder which was for ages the privilege of all who felt wounded in their honour, gives the Japanese a horrible pre-eminence in the Hara-kiri, and crime though we call it, there was much to admire in the stately heroism of those orderly suicides, notable for their fine appreciation of the dignity of Death, their reverent courtesy to his awful terrors, and sublime scorn for pain of body. From their infancy they looked forward to suicide as a terrible probability, the great event for which through the intervening years they had to prepare themselves. They learned by heart all the nice etiquette of the Hara-kiri: how they must do this, not that, stab themselves from left to right, and not from right to left. Strangely fascinating, indeed, are the *Tales of Old Japan*, and among them most terrible is the account of "the honourable institution of the Hara-kiri." I will try to describe it, keeping as well as I can the tone of Japanese thought :—

In the days of Ashikaga the Shogun, when Japan was vexed by a civil war, and prisoners of high rank were every day being put to shameful deaths, was instituted the ceremonious and honourable mode of suicide by disembowelling, known as Seppuku or *Hara-kiri*, an institution for which, as the old Japanese historian says, "men in all truth should be very grateful. To put his enemy, against whom he has cause for enmity, to death,

and then to disembowel himself, is the duty of every Samurai."

Are you a Daimio or a Hatamoto, or one of the higher retainers of the Shiogun, it is your proud privilege to commit suicide within the precincts of the palace. If you are of an inferior rank, you may do it in the palace garden. Everything has been made ready for you. The white-wanded enclosure is marked out; the curtain is stretched; the white cloth with the soft crimson mats piled on it is spread; the long wooden candlesticks hold lighted tapers; the paper lanterns throw a faint light around. Behind yon paper screen lies hidden the tray with the fatal knife, the bucket to hold your head, the incense-burner to conceal the raw smell of blood, and the basin of warm water to cleanse the spot. With tender care has been spread the matting on which you will walk to the spot, so that you need not wear your sandals. Some men when on their way to disembowel themselves suffer from nervousness, so that the sandals are liable to catch in the matting and trip them up. This would not look well in a brave man, so the matting is smoothly stretched. Indeed it is almost a pleasure to walk on it.

Your friends have come in by the gate Umbammon, "the door of the warm basin," and are waiting in their hempen dresses of ceremony to assist you to die like a man. You must die as quickly too as possible, and your friends will be at your elbow to see that you do not disgrace yourself and them by fumbling with the knife, or

stabbing yourself with too feeble a thrust. They have made sure that no such mishap shall befall. They will be tenderly compassionate, but terribly stern. They will guard you while your dying declaration is being read ; if you are fainting, they will support you, lest your enemies should say you were afraid of death. But do not trust to your old friendship with those around you ; do not try to break away from the sound of those clearly spoken sentences ; for if you do, your friends will knock you down, and while you are grovelling on the mats, will hew your head off with their heavy-handled swords. They will hold you down and stab you to death. Remember this—you *are to die, but you will not be allowed to disgrace yourself.*

You are here an honoured guest. The preparations for your death are worthy of a Mikado. But you must not presume upon the courtesy shown you. It is merely one-half of a contract, the other being that you shall die like a Samurai. If you shirk your share of the contract, your friends will break theirs, and will strike you to the earth like the coward you are.

See, the tapers are lit ! Are you quite ready to die ? Then take your way along that spotless carpet. It will lead you to the “door of the practice of virtue.” Yours is the place of honour on the piled rugs—in the centre of your friends. How keenly they fix their eyes upon you. It is their duty to see that you are dead before those tapers are out. Those tapers cannot last another

fifteen minutes. Be seated. Here is your old school-mate, Kotsuké, coming to you with the dreadful tray. How sternly his lips are closed ! You must not speak to him. Stretch out your hand to the glittering knife. Behind you, your relatives are baring their strong arms. You cannot see them, but they are there, and their heavy-handed swords are poised above you. Stretch out your hand. Why hesitate ? You *must* take the knife. Have you it firmly in your grasp ? Then strike ! Deep to the handle, let the keen blade sink—wait a minute with the knife in the wound that all your friends assembled in the theatre before you may see it is really there—now draw it across your body to the right side—turn the broad blade in the wound, and now trail it slowly upwards.

Are you sickening with pain ? ah ! your head droops forward, a groan is struggling through the clenched teeth, when swift upon the bending neck descends the merciful sword of a friend !

A Samurai must not be heard to groan from pain.

How different from the respectful applause that greets the Japanese self-murderer is the first sentiment of healthy aversion that is aroused in English men and women by the news of a suicide. It is true that sometimes, at the first glance, the preceding circumstances compel our scorn or provoke us into only a disdainful commiseration with the victim, but pity is sure to follow. For the Hara-kiri is always pathetic ; and if the suicide

be a woman, how tenderly the feeling of pity is intensified !

Take such a case, for instance, as that of Mary Aird. Happily married, and a loving mother, she yet threw her young life away in a sudden impulse of groundless apprehension for the future.

Mary Aird's letter, in which she announced to her husband her dreadful intention, hardly reads like a suicide's last word to those she loved best ; and the miserably inadequate reason she gives for putting an end to her life makes the sad document intensely pathetic. "Do not think hardly of me, Will, when I tell you I am going to throw myself over Westminster Bridge. Look after our two poor little children, 'Pop' and George, and tell Bessie I want her to look after them for you. Cheer up, dear Will ; you will get on better without me. There will be one trouble less. God bless you !" Such a letter as that, had that been all, would have gone far to prove what some have asserted, that suicides are not of necessity, and from the fact alone, insane. But there was a saving sentence. "The poor woman feared she could never meet her household expenses, because a pitiful debt of six shillings had "thrown out her accounts for the week. Moreover," said she, "troubles are coming." There really were no greater troubles than all mothers look forward to with hope and back upon with pride. Yet Mary Aird was dismayed for the moment at the thought of them, and seeing before her so easy a path

to instant and never-ending rest, carried with her to the grave the infant that would soon have owed her the sweet debt of life.

It is impossible, being human, for any to read the brief story without feeling the tenderest pity for the poor sister, wearied all of a sudden of this working world, fainting under the burden, as she supposed it, of exceptional, insurmountable misfortunes. Had any one met her on her way to death, and, knowing her case, offered her six shillings, she might have perhaps turned back, and been now the happy wife and happy mother that she was. She had her secret, however, hidden deep away in her heart—the secret that, by her own death, she would (as she thought) release those she loved best from many of the troubles of life—the secret that her duty to husband and children, the “poor little children Pop and George,” called upon her for the instant sacrifice of her life! In other forms the same unhesitating resignation of life presents itself to us as heroism of a grand type; but in the piteously small scale of the surrounding circumstances, and even the familiarity of the nature of the death, the grandeur of such a sacrifice is lost, and we feel only pity for the unhappy creature thus needlessly exchanging her bright home for the grave. False sentiment tempts men often to magnify the bravery of self-inflicted death, forgetting that the insanity which makes suicide so pitiful robs it also of all that commands admiration. In itself the crime is detestable, not only

as high treason against the Creator, inasmuch as, to quote the main argument of the Pagan moralists, we betray at the first summons of danger the life it was given us to guard, but also as profaning the nobility of our nature. Man is born with the strong instinct of living, and, as happy, careless childhood is left behind, serious and tender interests grow round the individual life, each of which makes it a more precious possession, and, by admitting others to share in its troubles and joys, robs the owner of all claim to dispose of it as if it were his own, undivided and intact. In death itself there is nothing for hopeful and helpful men and women, the workers of the world, to be afraid of—"Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark, and with as much reason." But this manly disregard of superstitious terrors should not degenerate into the holding of life cheap, nor, under the sudden pressure of unusual circumstances, make us lose sight of that bright star of hope which, if we will only look ahead, shines always over "tomorrow."

To some races such hopeful prospects seem impossible, and, in the East especially, the first summons of the enemy finds the garrison ready to yield. This frequency of suicide, however, and the general indifference to the crime as a crime, are among the surest signs of inferiority. All savage tribes, and even some of the nations of the East, though more advanced in civilization, fly to death as the first resource in trouble. They seek the relief of

the grave before having sought any other. But the circumstances of their lives, with religion or superstition teaching them that fate predestines everything, and magnifying the most trivial occurrences into calamities from which there is no appeal, often surround their deaths with incidents so picturesque and quaint that they deceive the judgment, and exalt the paltry suicide into an heroic surrender of life.

Such a one is, perhaps, that student's death up in "the cloudy wilderness within Blencathara." He had to leave college to go into a trade that was hateful to him; but rather than live apart from his books, he climbed one morning up to the misty heights, taking with him his Æschylus, Apollonius, and Cæsar, and having read them till daylight failed, made a last pillow for his head of the three volumes, and took a fatal dose of laudanum. Some again, by the terrible blackness of the clouds that had gathered over life, seem almost excused, as the crime of Jocasta against herself, or the death of Nero; while others—like those of Dr. Brown, who had prognosticated the ruin of England and was so mortified by the brilliant successes of the Pitt administration that he cut his throat, and the Colonel in Dr. Darwin's "Zoonomia," who blew his brains out because he could not eat muffins without suffering from indigestion—tend to the positively ludicrous. We are thus often betrayed, from one cause or another, into forgetting for the moment that the act of suicide is really only one of impatience with the crosses of life, and

a confession of defeat. Immeasurably sad it often is, as in the case of Mary Aird ; but in spite of the pathos surrounding the unhappy incident I have selected as typically pathetic, it is better to look at it gravely. We would, of course, far rather see in it only a young mother sacrificing her dearest treasures, life and the love of husband and child, under the delusion that her death was for their benefit ; but we are compelled to see in it much more than that. Lurking under the delusion lies the faint-hearted apprehension that "to-morrow" would be, and must be, just the same as "to-day," a fear of the the future that underlies every wilful suicide, and is at once the most disastrous and deplorable frame of the human mind. If troubles are ahead, the more need for, the more honour in, a resolute hold on life. Our race does not readily yield to despair, and every suicide among us, even though it be a woman's, takes something therefore from our national character ; and, in spite of an unavoidable feeling of sincerest pity for those who reckon death among the boons of nature, we ought to condemn with all our hearts the ignoble abandonment of life by those amongst us who have not the courage to wait and see if to-morrow will not cure to-day.





ISTE PUER.

MANY creatures claim to be the best abused, but I would pass them all by, whether spiders or oldest inhabitants, earwigs or police constables, and award that title to the boy—the “soaring, human boy” as Chadband puts it. A writer aiming rather at terseness than accuracy, has called the boy “the enemy of creation,” but I would rather read it as “the envy of creation.”

Every child, I take it, is a pet of Nature's, but among them the boy child is her favourite. There is no favour she withholds from him, and his only defects are of those things which will come upon him all too soon, and which acquired will but embitter his life. The boy, it is true, has no experience; but who would not rather be ignorant of the taste of the Dead Sea fruit? Again, he has no ballast, but surely then all the more conspicuous is Nature's custody of him! What other charges can be laid against him? That he is young is hardly a crime; and being young, if he possesses the attributes of youth he is hardly to blame.

"The boy is a thief?" Yes, but of what? He will steal apples from an orchard, although a farmer with his dog keeps guard. Every rookery must pay him tribute of its eggs, and every garden of its gooseberries. But hear him relate his exploit! There is none of the shamefacedness of a thief in his narration. He glories in the larceny, and when he can add assault to the lesser crime (he has pelted the lawful owner with his own fruit), his achievement becomes a triumph. And not to him only but to all his schoolfellows, who burn henceforth to emulate his deed of high emprise. The narrative of such a theft gives fresh blood even to the law-respecting adult. First, the lad tells of the stealthy approach—in the distance the farmer disappearing—then of the paling with hooked nails atop, on which, with puncturings of the flesh, the trouser was torn, and then the Red-Indian-like entrance to the orchard. The climbing up the trees—the handling of the great round fruit—the encounter, in returning, with the labourer who would capture him but is discomfited—the homeward flight across the turnip-field—the pursuit among the sheep hurdles—the final escape! And all this told by one ruddy-faced, clear-eyed lad sitting munching, among a munching circle, one of the forbidden fruit, while to each episode the merry music of real laughter lends its applause, and fired by the narration others plan a like adventure for the morrow. Surely, none of these boys are *thieves*? Why, let one of their number to-morrow

"steal like a thief"—and the orchard-robber of yesterday, the owner of many stolen rook's eggs, and he with his pocket still full of pilfered gooseberries, will kick him and call him "thief!" Is there in this difference anything more than sentiment?

"The boy is untruthful." Now, it is well known in public schools—and where the master is of a mean kind the knowledge is basely utilized—that to detect a culprit there is no surer means than to ask those suspected, "Did you do it?" If one of them did it, he says "Yes." His schoolfellows know he did it, and before them he is ashamed to lie, and having this honest shame he has no claim to the brand of untruthful. In a school of good tone a boy who had lied, who had made a false declaration to save himself from punishment, is considered below good-fellowship; and when a boy is scouted among his fellows, he seldom remains among them long. At each reassembling of the school, now one and now another of these outcasts is found to have disappeared, and no one regrets the disappearance. For the boy, in punishment and in hate, is very severe, often visiting with great cruelty a single slip. Yet he is not unfair, for the backslider seldom appears in after-life as a popular man, or respected in his profession. The black sheep of school, when found out, seldom rise again, and when heard of afterwards it is generally in the company of black sheep.

"The boy is a glutton." Well, what of that? So are

half the grown-up men in the world. The only difference in their gluttony is, that the boy's stomach has not by sad experience taught him caution, drawn out for him in clear black and white its tabulary statement of likes and dislikes. The voracity of a boy at a picnic is, it is true, supernatural and awful to contemplate, but it does no one harm. The misdemeanour of over-eating is an innocent one in youth, and, if the truth must be told, the contempt for congruities which the boy reveals in his confused feeding is very enviable to us whose *ilia* demand a seemingly regularity in-quantity and quality. I have seen a boy on Christmas Eve eating oysters, and while waiting for the next one to be prepared with vinegar and condiments, occupying himself with a mince pie! I confess to having been aghast at the frightful spectacle, but that boy has grown into a very fine young hussar, and I would not remember that early exploit against him unkindly. Nor is it only on the good things of life that a boy will debauch, for he will make merry over very frugal fare. Watch him on a holiday ramble and he is eating half the time. The nut and bramble yield him sustenance, the rose-bush gives up to him her bright berries, the hawthorn its coral bunches, and the crab-apple its wrinkled fruit. In early Spring he eats the tender sprouts of the white-thorn, and calls it "bread and cheese;" in Summer he finds "buns" in the calix of the thistle; and in Autumn startles the wood-pigeons from beneath the beech-trees

in his search for "mast." The streamlets give him watercresses, and the thicket the acid sorrel and the pignut. Not content with the store of wild strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, currants, bilberries, chestnuts, cranberries, and wild cherries (for all these grow wild in different parts of England), he lays under toll the sloe, and even, *crede experto*, rifles the dewberry, the yew, and the honey-suckle. He will rob a squirrel to roast its hoard of acorns. And on this wild feeding has been founded the charge against the boy of being "nasty!" Yet we would not undertake to decide which is the nastier feeder, the boy who divides his hazel-nuts with the dormouse, and the fruits of hedge and copse with the finches, or the man who bolts the green fat of tortoises, feasts on carrion-fed prawns, keeps his cheese till it jumps, and his grouse till it can be heard smelling all over the house. For myself I confess I prefer the latter diet immensely, but small lads at school would, for a great green apple, barter away a slice of the ripest Stilton, and forego a basin of alderman's soup for the looting of a neighbour's filbert-bush.

"The boy is dirty." I allow willingly that he protests against cold water on winter mornings, and that in his rambles he accumulates mud on his clothes with an extraordinary diligence. But his elders practically protest against cold water on cold mornings by seldom or never using it cold, and as for the mud, that is the fault of the mud; for I deny that any boy

absolutely prefers to have pounds of clay on his boots, stuffing up the lace-holes and making running wearisome. Mud-pies I do not hold with, considering them altogether abominable, but the boy of whom I am speaking is beyond the years for which such cates have attraction, and has arrived at a period of life when, if he had his way, he would as certainly abolish mud as Latin Grammars. At the same time, I confess that cleanliness is a matter of some indifference to him ; not but that he might prefer the green on tree-trunks *not* coming off on his clothes, but the knowledge that it will certainly come off does not make him hesitate to climb a mouldy fir-tree on the trivial pretence of investigating the contents of a manifestly-ancient wood-pigeon's nest. He arrives on the ground again with the front of his waistcoat green with the mould, and with a hole in his trousers, but he knows that "some one" will brush and mend his apparel, so he confines his regrets to the fact of the nest having been empty of eggs.

"The boy is mischievous." This cannot be denied. But in how many cases does not the mischief arise from a laudable spirit of inquiry ? How was he to foresee when he wished to test his powers of throwing a stone that the accursed pebble would drop on the old gentleman who happened to be on the other side of the wall ; or when he set his dog at a cat, "to see if it could catch it," by what process of argument was he to know that the cat and its pursuer would run through a cucumber frame

into the dairy? And is not hunting a cat natural to an English boy? He will hunt a cat when he is a boy as certainly as he will hunt a fox when he is a man. At the same time, he would as soon in his youth worry a kitten as in his manhood he would shoot a vixen. Stone a cock or pelt a gander?—of course he will! But he will not lift a rude hand to a chicken, or bully a gosling. And this is chivalry undeveloped. Cruel as boys are (and for their cruelty the Ana made of them their soldiers, turnkeys, and executioners) they are wonderfully full of compassion.

“Therefore he deserves all he gets.” This is generally a whipping. Now I deny the inference, for I have denied the validity of all the premises. If I were a modern boy, in these radically reforming times, I would organize a general strike against corporal punishment, and support the appeal by numerous citations from authority as to the dignity of boyhood—from Demosthenes’ tribute to the reverence due to youth to Wordsworth’s affidavit (whatever it may mean) that “the boy is the father of the man.” At any rate, it seems to me, the distinctive feature of this period of life, is popularly supposed to be that it is a whippable age, but this is really, if looked into, only a superstition, an old-world tradition, a musty, fusty fragment of antiquated wisdom. For what is the great principle of co-operation worth, if it may not be impartially extended—and what is to prevent boys extending it to corporal punish-

ment, by securing for their service the persons of other boys to be vicariously whipped?

High-class schools might, indeed, do well, for the greater contentment of their pupils, to imitate the Chinese system of vicarious punishment. The matter is, at any rate, worth the schoolboy's consideration, for there is no doubt that such a system tends to an economy of the outer cuticle and the evasion of many disagreeable sensations arising from pudding withheld or birch applied. Landladies thus find a cat useful.

In China, when juvenile royalty, for instance, has to be taught, the tutor is bound to provide for him an assortment of classmates, eight in number, and it is upon these, whenever the Prince fails in his lessons, that the rod falls. Upon his pupils entering the room the tutor rises from his chair as a sign of respect—an excellent custom, which schoolboys would do well to see introduced at once into the country—and when all have taken their seats he resumes his own. The Prince then receives his book, and is shown his task, which he at once commences to get off by heart. The allotted time having expired, he attempts to repeat it, and should he fail, the tutor immediately falls, with the utmost fury, rod in hand, upon the rest of the class, and thumps them soundly. Meanwhile, the Prince, for decency's sake, goes through the pantomime of excessive suffering, permitting himself to recover his equanimity only after the yells of his classmates have ceased.

There is something very delightful to contemplate in this proceeding; and in the present age, when money appears to be capable of buying anything and everything, there is no reason why our "golden youth" should not go up to the public schools with regular stipendiary "duppel gangers," to receive the punishment they have themselves merited. During class-time these mercenary and pachydermatous doubles might either remain conveniently huddled up under the forms or wait outside the door and be called in as the conduct of each of their principals required. Boys of fine sensibility might thus suffer acutely while the cane descended upon toughened integuments more suited to flagellation than their own delicate membranes, nurtured, it may be, under the purple. On the other hand, if little lords had thick skins of their own, the difference between thrashing them and beating a paid substitute would really be very small indeed, so that in either case justice would be met, and an enormous source of emolument be opened up to the lower classes. For a poor boy, studiously inclined, might, at the expense of an occasional whipping—to which, by the way, no disgrace beyond that of poverty would attach—enjoy all the advantages of the schools and private classes originally intended for his idle patron, and thus he might qualify himself for positions in life from which he is at present excluded. For middle-class schools, where the pupils are compelled to work hard in order to fit themselves to follow "the profes-

sions," a cheaper system might be introduced, and a whole class might combine to keep on hand one "whipping-boy" among them. Such a boy would, no doubt, be most economically obtained through the medium of the Co-operative Stores, a reduction being of course always allowed if a number were taken.

This glimpse of the school life of little Chinaboys—which I apprehend to be the proper abbreviation for Chinamen—must not, however, mislead our young school-goers into the error of supposing that in Peking everything disagreeable is done vicariously. It is impossible, for instance, on a cold morning for any one to wash his own face by simply watching another boy washing his, and in China face-washing is rigorously insisted upon, and under circumstances, too, that make it exceptionally galling. The Chinaboy has to be out of bed very early indeed—so early, in fact, that he might really just as well get up over night. This, again, leads to another evil, for if he were to get up over night, he could, of course, have no sleep at all, so the Chinese parent, to obviate this, sends youth to bed at sunset. The Emperor himself, when juvenile, has to go to bed by daylight, and to be up at his lessons at three in the morning, so that, if English youth really hopes to profit by a change of system, it must be careful to engraft only certain advantageous passages of the Chinese method upon our own, and not to introduce it entire. How, for instance, would they like the whole of their day to be taken

up, from three in the morning to bedtime, say five in the afternoon, with committing lessons to memory and monotonous athletics, having to go regularly all day long from the school-room to the gymnasium, and from the gymnasium back to the school-room—twenty lines by heart and a turn over the parallel bars, twenty lines more and then a hundred yards flat race, twenty lines more and then a good thumping with boxing-gloves—and so on for fifteen hours. This, however, is what China-boys have to submit to—vicariously. At intervals, certain portions of sustaining food would be weighed out and administered to each pupil, individual tastes being carefully ignored on principle, and no differences of consuming power considered—the real students being meanwhile in their “studies,” and “tucking in” to their hearts’ content on whatever they could afford to order—rats, puppy dogs, and snails, or anything else that is delicious and expensive. But, though I doubt if, on the whole, our public school boys would prefer the Chinese to the English system of education, yet the whipping boy is a special feature for which even young Eton and Rugby must entertain in their heart of hearts a certain appreciative regard.

Nevertheless, the excellent habits inculcated by the method hinted at above have a remarkable effect in after-life, when the Chinaboys have become Chinamen. Face washing continues to be habitual among them, and this, too, at the same unnatural hours that made school-

days so absurdly long at one end, and so ridiculously short at the other. From the lowest to the highest early rising is the rule, and if our Prime Minister were to go, as he does in China, to Windsor every morning at half-past two, he would expect to find her Majesty sitting up in a chair ready to receive him. All the Cabinet would have to accompany him, and at three a.m. the business of the Empire would come under discussion. Meals would be served up regularly from the imperial pantry; but, except for these intervals of diversion, all would remain on duty until four p.m. on ordinary days, and six on those set apart for special business. After these hours the Cabinet would be at liberty to spend their time as they chose—remembering only that they had to be back at the palace by half-past two next morning. Such is the official programme of a Chinese Minister's life when all goes well, but if, for instance, an ironclad were to be run down, accidentally torpedoed, or suffer from an explosion, the First Lord of the Admiralty would immediately be called upon to submit in person to the punishment which, in this country, would fall to very inferior officials—and he would do it—vicariously. For the whipping-boy would again intervene, and instead of the First Lord being actually beaten with a bamboo, he would provide, at his own expense, certain needy substitutes, upon whom the law would wreak its vengeance. He would at the same time submit a report to her Majesty, stating that as he had himself rammed, tor-

pedoed, or exploded one of her Majesty's ships committed to his care, he himself, in like manner, had received, according to law, one hundred and fifty blows of the greater bamboo, and two hundred and seventy from the lesser bamboo, besides having sat in the "cangue," in a public place, exposed to popular derision and the intolerable affronts of street boys, for three consecutive days. All the time that he was enduring these grievous punishments the First Lord would, of course, be, as usual, sitting comfortably in the reception-room at Windsor, receiving his meals from the royal pantry, and transacting the business of the State. But the decencies would have been preserved by the perpetuation of this elaborate fiction, and the vicarious offender would have been vicariously punished, his own confession of his personal offence, as also of his personal punishment, being published in the *Gazette*, for all China to see how rigorously the laws of the empire were enforced.

Chinese justice, from the school-room to the Cabinet, is, however, equally a fiction, and the demoralizing influence of the whipping-boy is manifest throughout. Accustomed at school to hear another child howl for offences he has himself committed, the boy grows up to manhood relying continually upon a substitute being at hand to smart for his crimes. This being the case, it is as well perhaps to remind the schoolmasters of the present generation that if their pupils should agitate for the introduction of vicarious punishment, their duty to the

country would require of them to oppose the innovation. So long as our boys take their own whippings, they have a chance of growing up Englishmen, but if they adopt the lodging-house-cat system of the Chinaboys, we may expect them to turn out only Chinamen.





DEATH, THE DAUGHTER OF MERCY.



A SHOOTING trip in the Kirwee jungles had laid me on my back, and when the long illness which followed the fever had relaxed its grip, I was weakened beyond words, and had worn out the hope of all, even of the wife to whom I had been married hardly a year. At times even I myself thought I must be dying. I was in no pain, but was dying from the simple want of strength to live, and in my weakness a phantasm, the Angel of Death, was a terror to me.

And one day I was asleep, and into my dreams had carried with me my waking thoughts of Death.

"Why do you tremble so?" asked a gentle voice in my ear.

I turned towards the speaker, and knew at once it was Hope. She put her arm under my head, "Why do you tremble so?"

"Because," I whispered, "I am afraid of death."

"Death," spoke Hope in my ear, "is the daughter of Mercy."

"Can so cruel, so hateful, a thing be a woman?" I asked in surprise.

"Yes, and she is most beautiful," was the soft reply.
"In heaven we all love her and pity her."

"You pity death? We on earth hate death, and fight against it; I myself am terrified at death."

"Come with me," said Hope, "and you shall see and tell your friends, when you get well, why it is that we in heaven love the sad daughter of Mercy."

And so I went up with Hope on the night-wind to heaven. And as we passed along the Milky Way, the bright highroad of the sky, we saw stars below our feet, on either hand and above us, not as we see them from the earth dotted here and there, but hanging about in great clusters, and in places the clusters swung so close together, that they made a common radiance, while round and over them floated large nebulous brightnesses made up, it seemed, of powdered stars. Yet bright above all showed the close-starred Milky Way slabbed with light. And as we sped along, my companion began to speak.

"The Thalaba is not the most beautiful among us, nor indeed the most lovable, but she is the grandest and the saddest of us all——"

"But *you* must be very beautiful," I said.

"Am I?" asked Hope, turning her face full towards me, and going on——

"On earth you have much that is beautiful in death, Sorrow, and Resignation, and Pity are all more beautiful," said Hope, "than I."

And Hope I then saw was not so very beautiful. It

was, for an Angel, a very human face, with a woman's depth of hope and love in the eyes, it is true, but with a woman's tender weakness in the lips and smile. And just then I saw coming towards us a child-angel, a poor haggard-looking waif. Its eyes were deep sunken and despairing. And to my surprise Hope turned off to it, and caught it up in her great arms, kissed it, and put it down again. And with one sad look the little one passed on down to the earth. Hope, I remembered, is the mother of Disappointment.

"Am I so very beautiful?" asked Hope again.

"I had thought," said I, "you were more beautiful," and so we passed on into the great space beyond the stars and where the sun is sphered—a void in which there is nothing, not even ether.

"Look!" said Hope, "there is Death on her way up to heaven, to give in her tale to the Greater Angel."

And I looked where Hope was pointing. It was away towards the East that, swiftly nearing the lowering floor-clouds of heaven, I saw the Angel of Death winging a burdened flight. The comparison is, I know, ignoble, but in the slow-measured beat of those great pinions, I remembered how once I saw a lammergeyer on the Himalayas working its way up the steep sky with laboured wing, to the cranny far up the naked rock where were hid its callow young. And with the same slow sweep of the wings did Death pass up the sky, and we followed her, and saw the great Angel enter Heaven, seating herself

upon the daïs of the Archangels. And then I saw what a glorious beauty was hers and what a weight of sorrow was enthroned upon her brow ! A world of Rachels could not have expressed among them all the grief which looked from the eyes of this great being. But in the posture of the head, the curve of the inimitable mouth, there was pride, and a pride born of the knowledge of power.

"Yet," whispered Hope, "she is not immortal. A day is coming, and she knows it, when she and her great father of the terrible arm and the child's face will have to go forth and cease upon the void of a dismantled earth."

But the Thalaba did not long remain at rest, for while I was looking with admiration, yes, and with pity, upon the Angel of Death, I saw come crowding round her all her troop of servitors, ill-favoured all of them but two. And the one of them was sweet-faced Iris, whose mission it is to whisper to the young wife that the child unborn will never live to see its mother, but that left to her still is the love of her husband. The other had a wild beauty in his eyes, and he it is who guides the hand of the suicide. First among the company stood gentle Time with his inexorable scythe, and next beside him stood that terrible one, whose breath is pestilence and glance a plague.

"Is she not beautiful?" asked Hope, and without waiting, went on, "see the sublime outline of her full, bloodless lips ! Her eyes, glorious though no soul looks

out at them, are supreme in their beauty. And what a gentle face ! Yet soft-cheeked she is never kissed, and soft-limbed as Love she has no lovers. But her father's great strength lodges in her full form, and pitiless, indeed, when she shuts her great eyes and her beautiful lips straighten in resolve, is the daughter of Anger."

"But was not her mother Mercy?"

"Yes," was the reply, "and often and again, as we have stood on either side a death-bed, have I seen behind those great eyes come welling up most human tears, and to snow blanch the splendid marble of her brow. Her fate is terrible and wrings her. To take the wife from the husband, the lover from the lover, the child from its mother, the idol of a nation from them, these are her awful tasks. And ever and again she revolts against Nature, and, flashing from her place, descends as swift as the eye-sight, to snatch from her over-zealous messengers a baby's life, or to give back, when even I, Hope, was turning from the bedside, a young wife to her husband, or an only son to his mother. And then she returns calm and impassionate to her place, and the Angel erases the last line from the Book of Fate——"

Hope had ceased, and I knew why ; for while I was looking at the Thalaba, she had been left alone, all her messengers having left to do her biddings, and her eye was full on mine. And as she looked, there glided out from behind her a thin fleshless thing which came swiftly

towards me, and taking my hand, drew me across the narrow space that had held me from death. *And Hope stayed behind.*

And as I passed on I knew my fate. I felt leaving me all life, all desire to live, a helpless bewilderment of fear. At last I stood before the Angel, and as I sank out of life this sentence slipped my fluttering lips—spoken in two worlds : “ Hope told me that Death was the Daughter of Mercy.”

And as my head drooped in death, I saw a second self. It was my soul leaving me. And then I saw the Angel turn one rebel flash towards the throne, and in a clear defiant voice I heard her throw down the challenge to Nature,—

“ And I AM the Daughter of Mercy ! ”

Then I heard Hope’s fluttering robes beside me, caught the nervous laugh with which she seized my hand, ———and I awoke !

* * * * *

“ What a wonderful recovery ! ” said all my friends.

The Doctor, a young man, was very proud of it. “ I thought,” he said, “ we should pull him through.”

And my little wife ? As she leaned over me, I heard her saying in my ear, “ If I had lost you ! only mine a year, and to have lost you so soon ! ” and I whispered something to her in reply.

“ Ah,” said the young Doctor pompously, “ he will be

delirious no doubt yet a while—but we've pulled him through this time."

But all I had whispered to my little wife was, "Ethel, she was right. Beautiful and very merciful is Death, the Daughter of Mercy."





DOGS WE HAVE ALL MET.



AM very fond of dogs, and have indeed, in India, had as many as seven upon my establishment at one time. Some of them I knew intimately, others were mere acquaintances, but speaking dispassionately of them, and taking one with another, I should hesitate to say that they were superior to ordinary men and women. It is, I know, rather the fashion, not only at teetotal lectures, but in other sensible company, to cite the dog as a better species of human and to depreciate men as if they were dogs gone wrong. I am not at all sure that this is just to ourselves, for, speaking of the dogs I have met—the same dogs in fact that we have all met—I must say that on the whole, I look upon the dog as only a kind of beast after all. At any rate I am prepared to produce from amongst my acquaintances as many sensible men as sensible dogs, while as regards general morality, I really do not think the dogs would have a chance in comparison. I can bring into court, immediately if necessary, a large number of human beings who if taken by accident or design out of their road

will set themselves right again, who if separated for years from friends, will readily recognize them and welcome them, who on meeting those who have done them previous injuries will show at once by their demeanour that they remember the old grudge, who will detect false notes in a player's performance, catch thieves, carry baskets to the butchers, defend their masters, and never worry sheep. On the other hand I will produce in equal number dogs who get themselves lost regularly and "for good," until a reward is offered, who never recognize old acquaintances but will fawn upon those who have injured them, who will sleep complacently through the performances of organ-grinders and never wake up when thieves are on the premises, who cannot be trusted with meat, and who will run away from their masters if danger threatens. Being quite certain of this, I think I am justified in maintaining that dogs are no better than men, and indeed I should not quarrel with him if any one were to say that but for man the dog would have been much worse than he is—probably, only a wolf still.

As a matter of fact, most of the dogs of my acquaintance have been positively stupid. One that I remember well was, however, considered by my friends of remarkable intelligence; but this story often told of him, to illustrate his intelligence, did not give me, when I heard it, any high opinion of his intellect. But I may be wrong. He was accustomed, it appears, to go with the family to church. But one day the old church roof

began to leak, so workmen were set at the job and the building was closed. But when Sunday came this intelligent dog trotted off as he was wont to do, to the church, and, composing himself in the porch as usual, remained there the customary time and trotted complacently home again. Now, where does the intelligence come in, in this anecdote?

In a similar way stories are told in illustration of other feelings and passions, but most of them, so it seems to me, cut both ways. There are, indeed, many human feelings which the dog evinces in a marked way, and often upon very little provocation. The dog, for instance, expresses *anger* precisely as we do, and in accordance with the human precept, "When the boy hits you kick the post," will bite his friend to show his displeasure at a stranger. I had a little bull-terrier which went frantic if a pedlar or beggar came to the door, and being restrained from flying at the innocent itinerant, would rush out as soon as released into the shrubbery and go for the gardener. The gardener knew the dog's ways, for he had had a sharp nip vicariously before, and when he saw Nellie on her way towards him, used to charge her with the lawn mower. Now at other times, the gardener and Nellie were inseparable friends, and, weather permitting, the gardener's coat and waistcoat were Nellie's favourite bed. In human nature it is much the same, when the husband, because the news in the paper is disagreeable, grumbles at his wife's cap.

Hatred also the dog feels keenly—in the matter of cats notably. I have seen one of the exceptionally intelligent dogs referred to above, stop and jump under a tree for an hour, and go back every day for a month afterwards to jump about ridiculously under the same tree, all because a cat which he had once been after, and wanted to catch, had got up that tree out of his way. There is no doubt in my mind whatever from that dog's behaviour that he *hated* the cat.

Jealousy again is a common trait, and in Thornley's book there is an instance given of a dog that was so jealous of another pet that when the latter died, and had been stuffed, he always snarled if attention was drawn to the glass case from which his rival gazed with glassy eye upon the scene. The *envy* of the dog has given rise to the well-known fable of the dog in the manger, and the story told in "False Beasts and True" (in illustration of canine "sagacity") exemplifies this trait in a striking way. Leo was a large and lawless dog, belonging to an establishment where lived also a mild Maltese terrier. The latter, however, fed daintily, and was clad in fine linen, whereas Leo got as many rough words as bones, and was not allowed into the pretty rooms of which the terrier was a favoured inmate. From the reports furnished of the judicial inquiry which followed the crime, it seems that the lesser (very much lesser) dog had been missed for several days, and his absence bewailed, while something in the

demeanour of the big dog suggested to all beholders that some terrible tragedy had occurred and that Leo was darkly privy thereto. At length a servant going to the coal-hole heard a feeble moaning proceeding from the farthest corner, and on investigating with a candle, the Maltese terrier was found buried under lumps of coal. The supposition was that Leo had carried his diminutive rival to the coal-hole, and there scratched down an avalanche of coals upon him, and the manners of the two dogs when confronted bore striking evidence to the truth of the theory. Of Leo's *envy* there can hardly therefore be a suspicion.

Gluttony is common to all dogs, but their general aversion to *drunkenness* is supposed, by their partial eulogists, to be demonstrated by the fact attested by the Rev. F. Jackson of a dog who, having been once made so drunk with malt liquor that he could not get upstairs without help, always growled and snarled *at the sight of a pewter pot!* To establish in a feeble way this individual's dislike of malt liquor, the eulogist, it seems to me, has trifled away the dog's intelligence altogether. Nor, as illustrating sagacity, is the following anecdote so happily chosen as it might be. Begum was a small red cocker who, with a very strange perception of her own importance, engaged as her attendant a mild Pomeranian of her own sex, who having only three available legs, displayed the gentler manners of a confirmed invalid. Begum, several times

in her long and respected career, became the joyful mother of puppies, and on all these interesting occasions her friend Rip (or Mrs. Gamp, as she came to be called) presided over her nursery, kept beside the mother in her temporary seclusion, exhibited the "little strangers" to visitors with all the mother's pride during her absences, and in short, behaved herself like a devoted friend. "Strange to say," says the author, "when the poor nurse herself was dying, and Begum was brought to her bedside to cheer her, the 'sagacious' cocker snuffed her friend and, then leaping gaily over her prostrate, gasping form, left the stable for a frolic—and never looked in again on her faithful attendant." This narrative, vouched for as true, illustrates the remarkable *gratitude* "which may be almost said to be a dog's leading principle."

Regret and *grief* dogs no doubt share also with men, for my own terrier when he stands with sadly oscillating tail and his head stuck through the area railings, whimpering for "the touch of a vanished cat" and "the sound of a puss that is still," bears ample testimony to the former, nor when, out ferreting, the rabbit has mysteriously disappeared into an impassable earth, is there any room for hesitation as to Tim's *grief*. His regret at the rabbit's evasive habits is unmistakable. Mrs. Sumner Gibson, to illustrate *joy*, tells us of her pet, which on seeing her unexpectedly return after a long absence *was violently sick*. I remem-

ber when at school seeing a violent physical shock, accompanied by the same symptoms, affect a boy when suddenly approached by a master while in the act of eating gooseberries in class. But none of us attributed the result to any excess of delight.

Laziness is a trait well exemplified in dogs. Thus Cole's dog of ancient fame was so lazy that he always leaned his head against a wall to bark. So did Ludlam's.

Courage is not more common among dogs than among men. I had once three dogs who accompanied me on a certain occasion to a museum. The hall at the entrance was devoted to the larger mammalia, and the dogs on passing the folding doors found themselves suddenly confronted by the whole Order of the Carnivora all drawn up according to their families and genera, ready to fall upon and devour them. With a howl of the most dismal horror, all three flung themselves against the door, and if I had not rushed to open it, would certainly have died or gone mad then and there from sheer terror. As it was, they flew through the open door with every individual hair on their bodies standing out like a wire, and arrived at home, some three miles off, in such a state of alarm that my servants were seriously alarmed for my safety. One of the three always slept in my room at night, but on the night after the fright howled so lamentably, and had such bad dreams, that I had to expel him. Miss Cobbe, perhaps as an instance of signal courage in a dog, mentions Trip, a bull terrier, who ready apparently to fight any-

thing, went into "paroxysms of hysterical screaming" if an India rubber cushion was filled or emptied with air in her presence, and the garden hose filled her with such terror that on the day when it was in use "Trip" was never to be found on the premises, nor would any coaxing or commands persuade her to go into the room where the tube was kept all the rest of the week.

Pride affects the dog mind, for who has not heard of Dawson's dog that was too proud to take the wall of a dung cart, and so got flattened under the wheels? *Vanity* was admirably displayed by an old setter, who often caused us great inconvenience by insisting on following members of the family whenever they went out, usually most inopportunately. But one day the children, playing with it, tied a bow of ribbon on to the tip of its tail, and on everybody laughing at the dog's appearance, the animal retired under the sofa and sulked for an hour. Next day therefore, when Nelson showed every symptom of being irrepressibly intent on accompanying the family to a croquet party to which he had not been invited, it occurred to one of the party to try the effect of a bow. The ribbon was accordingly brought, and Nelson being held quiet by two of the girls, the third decorated his tail. No sooner was he released, and discovered the adornment, than the self-conscious dog rushed into the house and hid under the sofa. An hour after the party were gone, he came out as far as the doorstep, and when the family returned there was

Nelson sitting on his haunches with the most comic air of having something mortifying to conceal and refraining from even wagging his tail, lest the hateful bow should be seen. Chivalry, magnanimity, treachery, meanness, a sense of propriety or utter absence of shame, humour, &c., may all in turn be similarly proved to be shared by the dog world; but it is a singular fact that so many of the anecdotes put forward to illustrate the virtues of this animal should, when read by more sensible admirers of the dog, lend themselves to conflicting if not opposite conclusions.

Indeed, I look upon the woolly little white dog we have all met so often as absolutely criminal. You can see what a timid creature it is by the way it jumps when any cabman shouts, and yet its foolishness and greediness have got as many men into gaol as a street riot would have done. You have only to look at it to see what an easy dog it is to steal. In fact, it was made to be stolen, and it faithfully fulfils its destiny. One man—the father of a young family, too—has been in prison twice for stealing that same dog. It is true that, on the other hand, he has sold it at a splendid profit on five other occasions, and has pocketed a handsome reward for “finding” it several times besides, but he nevertheless owes several weeks’ incarceration to that same little dog’s infamously criminal habit of looking so stealable. He can no more keep his hands off the animal than needles can help going to the nearest loadstone. It is of no

use his trying to look the other way, or repeating the Lord's Prayer, or thrusting his hands right down to the bottom of his breeches' pockets, for as surely as ever that little dog comes by, "Jerry" will have to steal it. It is chiefly the dog's fault. It never follows its master or mistress for the time being like a steady dog of business, but trots flickeringly about the pavement as if it was going nowhere in particular with nobody. It makes excursions up alleys on its own account, and comes running back in such a hurry that it forgets whether it ought to turn to the right or the left ; or it goes half across a road and then takes fright at a hansom, and runs speeding down the highway in front of it under the impression that the cab is in pursuit. Or it loiters at a kerbstone to talk canine common-places to another dog, and then, like an idle errand boy, accompanies its new acquaintance a short way round several corners. Or it mixes itself up with an old gentleman's legs, and gets eventually trodden upon, and precipitately makes off squeaking down the middle of a crowded thoroughfare into which its owner cannot follow it. Of all these weaknesses Jerry and his comrades are perfectly well aware ; and if you will only follow the dog for a quarter of an hour you will see the little wretch get "lost," as it calls itself—or as Jerry calls it, when the policeman inquires about the dog. There are some people who go through life leaving watches on dressing-tables and money on mantelpieces, and then prosecute the servants who steal them ; others who lend

strangers sovereigns in order to show their "confidence" in them, and then call in the police to get the stranger punished; others who post money in open envelopes, and are bitterly indignant with the authorities because it is never received by the addressee; many again who walk about with their purses in pockets placed where morality never meant pockets to be; who, in fact, are perpetually putting temptation into the way of their weak brethren, and then putting their weak brethren in gaol. And the foolish little white dog that is always getting itself stolen is exactly their representative in the canine society, which, dog enthusiasts tell me, reflects our own.

For myself, I think the dignified position which the dog fills in human society can be far more worthily treated, than by anecdotes of his various virtues and vices, for after all he is one of man's chiefest triumphs, and one of his noblest servants. "In the beginning Allah created Man, and seeing what a helpless creature he was He gave him the Dog. And He charged the Dog that he should be the eyes and the ears, the understanding and the legs of the Man."

The writer, Toussenel, then goes on to show how the dog was fitted for his important duties by being inspired with an overwhelming sense of the privileges of friendship and loyal devotion, and a corresponding disregard of the time-wasting joys of family and fireside pleasures, thinking, no doubt, with Bacon, that those without families—the discipline of humanity—make always the

best public servants. "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune ; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief." And again, "Charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool." The dog, therefore, was relieved of paternal affections in order that he might be able to give an undivided mind to the high task set before him, and thus afford primitive man, in the flock-tending days, the leisure necessary for discovering the arts and evolving the sciences.

If Tubal Cain, for instance, had had to run after his own herds he could never have got on with his pan-pipes ; so the dog attended to the sheep and the goats, the kine and the camels, while his master sat in the shade by the river, testing the properties of reeds. Music was the result—thanks to the dog. In the same way, perhaps, we might trace all other great discoveries to the same canine source, and, really, seeing even nowadays, when man has become such a self-helping creature, how many dogs keep men and how many of them support old ladies, the philosopher would seem to have some basis for his fanciful theory that, but for dogs, men would still have been shepherds and human society still in its patriarchal stage. The Red Indians keep no dogs ; and what is the result ? All their time is given up to dog's work, and they lead a dog's life doing it—chasing wild things about and holloaing after them. Other peoples, however, who started with them in the race of nations, and who

utilized the dog, are now enjoying all the comforts of nineteenth-century civilization, hunting only for amusement and shepherding only on valentines. Professor Huxley might, to the public advantage, follow out the great line of reasoning here so hastily hinted at, for perhaps he could prove that the origin of society has lain unsuspected all these many centuries, in the great fact that the dog after all is the germ, the protoplasm of civilization. And if the learned Professor wishes to fortify his own opinion on this point, he has only to go to the dogs and ask theirs. But he must be prepared for humiliating disclosures.

If, indeed, the dogs were ever to have their day all together, instead of as now frittering away their strength by every dog having his day by himself, provincial humanity would have a painful experience of its helpless condition, and many a single villager would go suddenly to his grave. At present old men and tiny children suffice to "tend" sheep and cattle; for their four-legged lieutenants are neither blear-eyed nor deaf, senseless nor decrepid, and they do all the work, remembering the original charge given to them on prediluvian plains that they should be "the eyes and the ears, the understanding and the legs of man." If, however, these useful animals were to combine for concerted action, and simultaneously take holiday all together, the terrible memory of those Dog Days would never perish from the country-side. The plough and the loom would be deserted, for all the able-bodied in every parish would be occupied with hound-

ing their own cattle off neighbours' lands, and, so to speak, dogging their restless sheep from gap to gap. Every available public building would be turned for the time into a pound, and Bumble would clear out the unremunerative tenants of the parochial workhouse to make room for stray cattle. A far more serious result would be this: that the Metropolitan Meat Markets could not be supplied, for our beef and mutton, remarking the absence of the usual dog, would nimbly scatter themselves over the shires, instead of following the high roads to town. Starvation would ensue, and gaunt *Famine*, stalking forth—but such a prospect is too dreadful to pursue, even in fancy; for, though in this dire strait the uselessness of the dog might certainly point it out for consumption, we could not, even for the sake of cheapened “mutton-pies,” advise so suicidal a cuisine, for every one will surely agree with me on this point—that the dog, though not quite good enough to eat, is far too good to be eaten.

Who, indeed, has not at his fingers' ends any number of stories of the intelligence, the fidelity, and other virtues of the dog? And who at a moment's notice could not conjure up all the great dogs of fame—Ulysses' dog and Punch's dog, Alcibiades' dog and Cerberus, Barry of St. Bernard's and “the member of the Humane Society,” Gelert and Lance's dog “Crab,” the dogs of Mtesa, the emperor of Uganda, and that other animal who, “to serve some private ends, went mad, and

bit the man ;" the dog of Montargis and Mother Hubbard's dog, and the Greater and the Lesser Dogs of the constellations ; the spaniel of Mary Queen of Scots and Anubis of Egypt ; the pack of the Spectre Huntsman and the Red Dog of the Savana-durga ; Ketmir that went with the Seven Sleepers into their cave, and the poodle that saved the Prince of Orange ; the barometer dog of the Ptamphaoniens, and the dog "that worried the cat" in the notable history of the "House that Jack Built ;" Tobit's dog and the dog in the Moon, Bill Sikes's mongrel and the dogs of Jezreel—with probably as many more that might be recollected with little effort. Each and all of them have done duty again and again to point a moral or adorn a tale, and what an avalanche of reminiscences and associations falls upon the mind when we summon before us, in all their miscellaneous array, the ban-dogs and bloodhounds of story, the war-hounds of savage tribes, the turnspits and truffle dogs and lapdogs of a past day, the Newfoundlands and Scotch shepherd dogs of the present, the dogs used for sport in England, for work as in the snows of Greenland, and in battle as in the plains of Equatorial Africa ! What a multitude they become, these dogs of a hundred varieties, and yet they say the original of them all was a wretched thing of the wolf kind ; and that the jackal, a poor dog gone wrong, shows what the type might degenerate into if the alliance between man and dog were ruptured !

Problems enough even to satisfy modern inquirers

abound, therefore, in the subject of the Dog. The origin of its varieties traverses all the field of natural science, and the question of its "consciousness" involves all metaphysics—a Pelion of enigmas piled on an Ossa of puzzles. Writers on the dog claim for it the noblest attributes of humanity, and share with it our meanest failings; and, although the vast majority of instances of canine "mind" may be classified under the phenomena of self-interest and imitation, it is humiliating to feel that, if the dogs were to give their opinions of men, the same classification would hold good, and that for each of their own weaknesses they could cite a parallel among men. Were, then, the Egyptians right in thinking these animals mysteries beyond human comprehension; and is all the East wrong when it declares that dogs have every one of the gifts of humanity, and one more besides, the gift of seeing the air and the spirits of the air, of perceiving that which man is mercifully prevented from seeing—Asrael, the Angel of Death, as he moves about among the living? Some day, perhaps, some one will be able to tell us where dog consciousness begins and ends, and how far dog intellect coincides with our own. An authoritative decision would be welcome, for, as the matter stands, man seems in some danger of being reckoned only the second-best of animals.

In a dispassionate view of the subject, however, the foibles of the dog should not be, as they so often are, overlooked.

Indeed, it might be well if some one would compile a "counter-blast" of remarkable instances of the intelligence and docility of man—the human Trustys and good Dog Trays that abound in the world; the men who have been known to lose their friends in the streets and to find them again; who have been carried to immense distances by wrong trains, and turned up at home after all; who recognize acquaintances with every demonstration of delight after a long separation; who carry baskets from the baker's and do not eat the contents by the way; who worry cats; who rescue men from drowning and from other forms of death; who howl when they hear street organs; who know a thief when he comes creeping up the back stairs at midnight, and hold him until help arrives; who fetch, and carry, and beg; who, in fact, do everything that a dog can do, and have died for all the world like Christians.

Such instances of intelligence in men, and even women, abound, and are amply authenticated by eye-witnesses.

Nor are any of the passions which move dogs unknown to human kind, for anecdotes illustrative of anger, fear, envy, courage, and so forth, are plentifully scattered up and down the pages of history and biography. In short, looking at the matter from both sides, I really think myself that there is no reason for supposing that man is in any way inferior to the dog.

Yet I cannot help thinking that a dog-show is some-

what of an anachronism, and a relic of the darker ages, for, unless a great deal that has been written on the subject is nonsense, the exhibition of these animals is both inhuman in the exhibitors and degrading to the animals. The dog, we have been told again and again, is something better than a mere beast, and instances have been heaped together of specimens that were even something better than human beings. They have been held up to us as examples to be imitated not only in fidelity, courage and other moral virtues, but in intelligence also; and, if this be the case, if dogs think and feel like men and women, what right, have we to "show" them as if they were mere horses, or cattle, or cats? It is true that babies are sometimes exhibited, but then infants at the exhibition age are not sensitive in matters affecting the display of their bodies, and are barely human after all. It is also true that barmaids have been "shown," but this was with their own consent, and because they liked it. Now, neither case is analogous to that of the dog-show, for "the friend of man" is especially sensitive on many points in which at a public exhibition his feelings are keenly wounded, but through which a baby sleeps or bottles without the slightest symptom of affliction; while, again, the dog's permission to be shown is never asked, as the barmaid's is.

A really corresponding case would be that presented if some limited liability company were to collect as many specimens of "inferior humanity" as they could, and cage

them all up for the amusement of the public. But what would be thought of such a show of South Sea Islanders and Zulus, Red Indians, Esquimaux, Maoris, and Bushmen, Australians and Bheels, Hottentots, Aztecs and Patagonians, dreadful nameless savages from Central Africa, and queer nomad folk from Central Asia, Tchik-Tchiks from Tchuk-Tchuk, cannibals and Cuban slaves, idiots, atheists, and habitual drunkards, half-breeds of all kinds, dwarfs and giants, Albinos, and "the hairy families of Burmah," troglodytes, lake and tree dwellers, two-headed nightingales and Macrobian, Ari-masps, anthropophagi, and all the other eccentricities and diversities of mankind, which as yet are only by courtesy admitted as men? Everybody would of course go to see them, but many would come away shocked. Imagine, for example, the feelings of the cannibal in the centre of such an exhibition, and the mental torture to which the poor creature would be subjected; or think for a moment of the sufferings of the Choctaw at seeing all day and hearing all through the night the voice of a hereditary foe of the Sioux tribe in the next cage. Have dwarfs no feelings, or giants no susceptibilities? Yet we have been repeatedly told that the dog is a link between man and beast, sometimes even that man is only a second-rate dog; and, notwithstanding this, we deliberately take advantage of our superior cunning and appliances for transport, to carry off to a "Show" all the kinds of dogs we can find, the little ones in hampers, the big ones in

four-wheeled cabs, and, having arranged our fellow-beings according to classes, solemnly proceed to award them prizes for excellence ! Either, then, the dog-show is an anachronism, or the superior theory of dogs is untenable, and, at any rate, the two are not compatible in reason.

Whether the dogs will ever be able to turn the tables on us and organize a man-show it is, of course, impossible to say : but there is no doubt that if they did, and if they would admit the general public on payment to the exhibition, the speculation would be immensely diverting and also very remunerative. A foxhunter in a cage would be an infinitely more interesting object than a foxhound, and a monk of St. Bernard's certainly not less attractive than his mastiff. At present we go to look at lapdogs grouped together in pens, but who would not prefer going to see their pretty owners, all dressed up for the day, with blue ribbons round their necks, and little silver bells that tinkled ? In another class of pet dogs, the wheezy poodles, the display of elderly females would be full of instruction, and it would also be an admirable discipline to go round the various types of sportsmen, shepherds, carriage folk, blind men, drovers, ratcatchers, Humane Society's men, and other human correlates of the dogs, that would be exhibited if the dogs only had their day. Or the dog-show of the future might be an equitable fusion of the two species, men and dogs together. At present men and women have everything in their own hands, and for some reason, pretend one

day that the dog is half-human, and on the next "show" him in public as if he were only a cat. In the future it may be the dogs will have the best of it, and put men up for prizes in the same objectionable way, awarding medals for the length of their legs or the blackness of the roofs of their mouths. Meanwhile, we may anticipate matters by acting honestly up to our theories, and exhibiting side by side the poacher and his cur, the hunting-man and his hound. This would be both generous and becoming, and we should escape the charge which may now be fairly levelled at us of sporting with the feelings of creatures which we declare to be as susceptible as ourselves.

But if such a scheme should prove in advance of the times, we would suggest the compromise of showing only such dogs as are remarkable for moral and intellectual points rather than physical qualities. Thus, instead of degrading the creatures into classes of rat-hunting, long-haired, snub-nosed, or curly-tailed animals, we might exhibit them according to their degrees of virtue, in grades of fidelity, chivalry, humour, magnanimity, courage, modesty, patience, intelligence, gratitude, affection, and so forth—with a special department, it might be, for uncleanly, gluttonous, proud, covetous and ill-tempered specimens, and for dogs that worry cats. No dog could object to such a show as this, for he would be at once placed on a par with ourselves, with Sunday-school children and the Victoria-cross heroes, men who save lives at the risk of their own, and prizemen at our Universities

—with, in fact, every class of men who have to parade in public for the reception of honours worthily won. The dog that repeatedly carried a basket from a baker's, and never touched the contents would then feel no humiliation in being admired ; and, in a community of admiration, the dogs that love their masters and know them when they meet them again need suffer from no wounded susceptibilities at such public exhibitions. A bandy-legged bull-dog is considered at present a prize medalist, and the more bandy the greater its merit ; but what sensible dog could take credit to itself for such a shape ? A glance at it, or at the turnspit, a mere cylinder on castors, suffices to show, if the expression on the face goes for anything, that each considers it is being made a fool of ; while in the pathetic endurance of the larger breeds there is evident a very dignified protest against the process of exhibition, the monotony and the discomforts of it, the vulgar clamour of neighbours, the tedious length of the show, the triviality of the spectators' sympathy and the irrelevance of their observations. But in the kind of collection we suggest there need be no outrage to individual feelings, for Punch dogs would be there as representing the popular British drama, and not as mongrels ; and the mangy old colley, that had saved its master a handsome fortune in sheep, would take precedence of the oiled and curled darlings of the drawing-room hearthrug.

As an improvement, therefore, upon the ordinary

exhibition, I would suggest one either of men and dogs together, or else "a moral dog-show." A great number of people are tired of preposterous poodles and impossible cockers, and would like to see a more generous attention directed to the development of virtues. Legs and tails and other things of the kind are no doubt all excellent in their way, but now that we have proved by demonstration how much tail a dog can carry and how little leg he can do with, it would be interesting to know how often, for instance, a dog can be stolen and get home again, or how far he can go wrong and set himself right. It is beyond a doubt, now, that a dog's lower teeth can be made to project until he can nearly scratch his forehead with them ; but would that dog, if his own master came creeping up the back stairs in listed slippers in the middle of the night, distinguish him from a housebreaker? Experiments have long ago satisfied us that the number of rats a terrier can kill in a given time is something prodigious ; but where shall we look for the chivalrous dog who, being set after a rat, refused to catch it, because he saw it had a broken leg? Such specimens as these, the moral and intellectual animals—or perhaps we ought to call them persons—of whom we have read so much would constitute a dog-show of great interest ; and if to them could only be added a few of the more celebrated dogs of the day, such as the Derby dog, Bismarck's dog, or the dog in the moon, the attractions of the collection would be much enhanced.

It is too late of course to think of any of the Crusaders' dogs, or the hound that followed the Indian prince so faithfully to heaven ; the black brute in Faust, or the fifty animals of Acteon's pack ; the dog that Socrates always swore by, or King Lear's ungrateful pets ; Moera, the dog of Icaros, whom we call Procyon, or the hounds of Ate ; King Arthur's favourite mastiff Cavall, or Aubrey's champion ; Fingal's dog Bran, or Boatswain, Lord Byron's retriever, or angry Zoilus the great dog of Thrace ; Geryon's brutes, or "glutton" and "the bear-killer that Orion owned. These and many another dog famous in the past are gone beyond recall. But the descendants of some of them survive, of the dogs that went into the ark with Noah for instance, while the posterity of Anubis are still to be met prowling about the bazaars of the Nile villages, and in Greece may be found the lineal posterity of the dogs that tore Euripides to pieces, or even those to which the wily Ulysses nearly fell a victim. Agrippa's dog, that had a devil chained to his collar—so contemporary history gravely assures us—would be out of place, as he is certainly out of date, at the Crystal Palace ; but there are still to be had for the collecting, many dogs of great historical association. The true breed of Sirius is a vexed question to this day, but should be settled ; and it will need a great deal of special training to get little dogs to laugh at the pranks of cats and fiddles, or greater ones, like that of Alexander, to revenge themselves on enemies only by silent contempt. The problems of the dog

world, and the many phases of dog life which still remain to be exhibited, are, therefore, it will be seen, both numerous and varied, and if it were possible to combine them by illustration in a single Exhibition, the moral dog-show of the future would be both a pleasing and an instructive novelty.



LONDON:
PRINTED BY GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, LD.,
ST. JOHN'S HOUSE, CLERKENWELL ROAD, E.C.

